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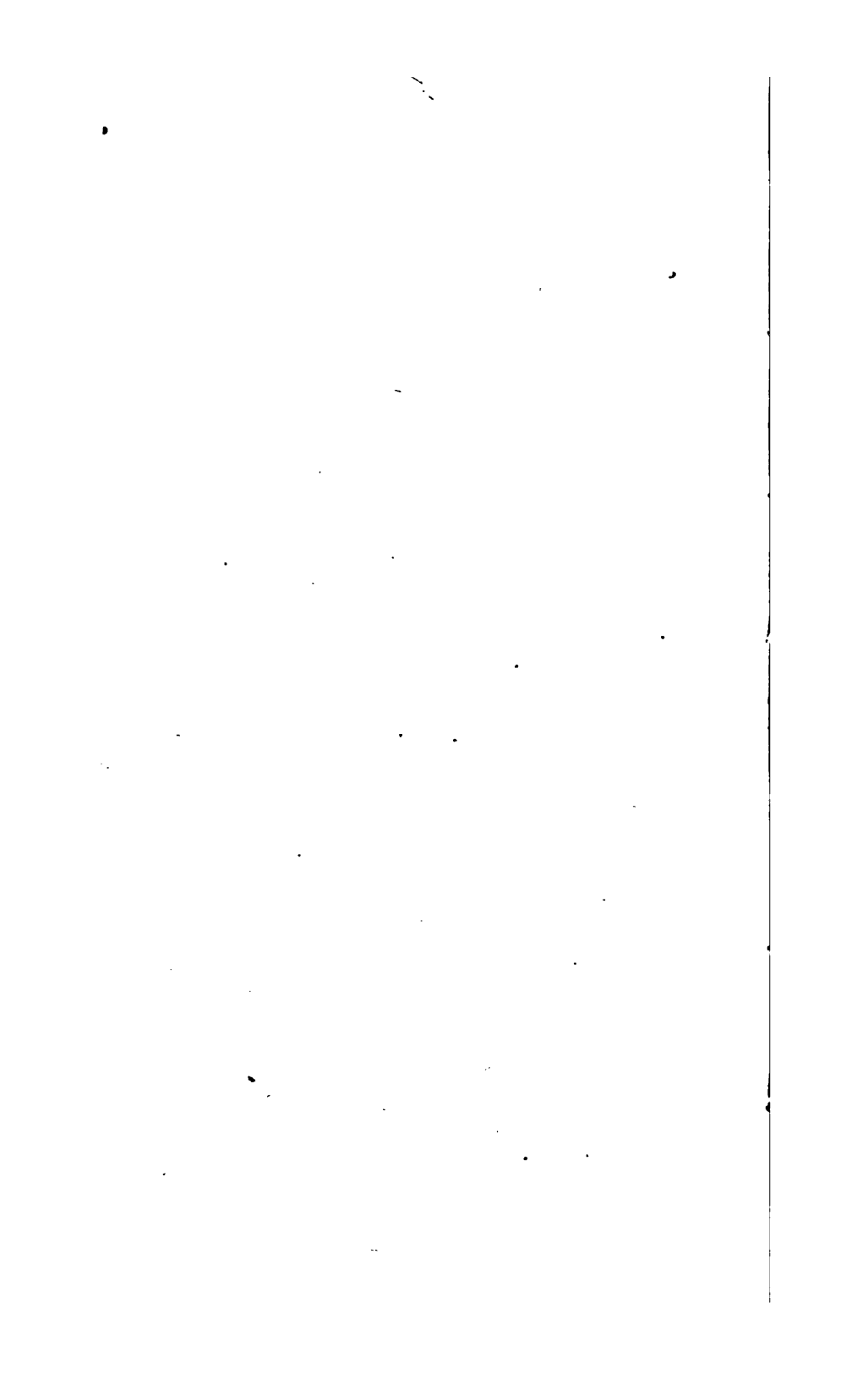
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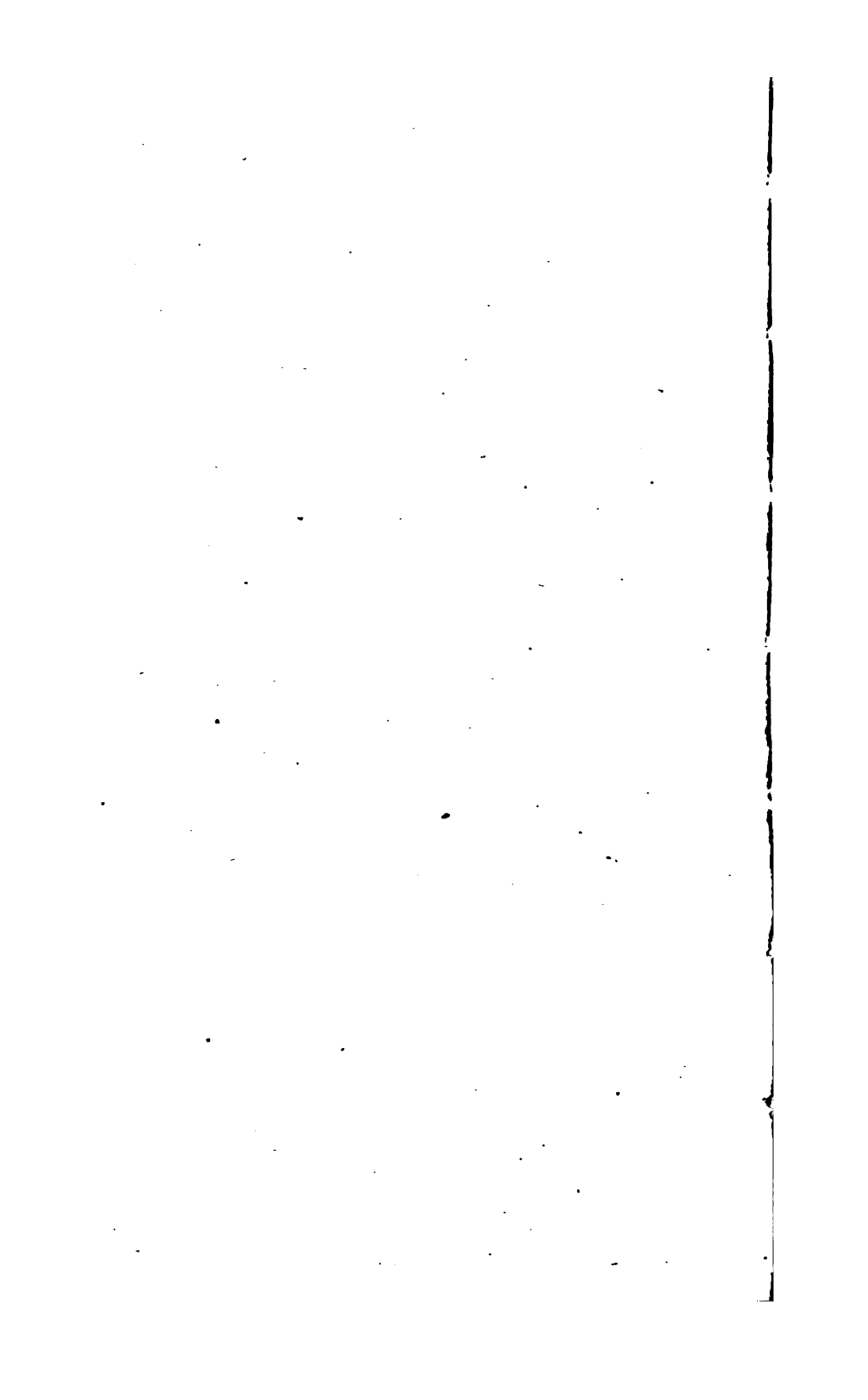


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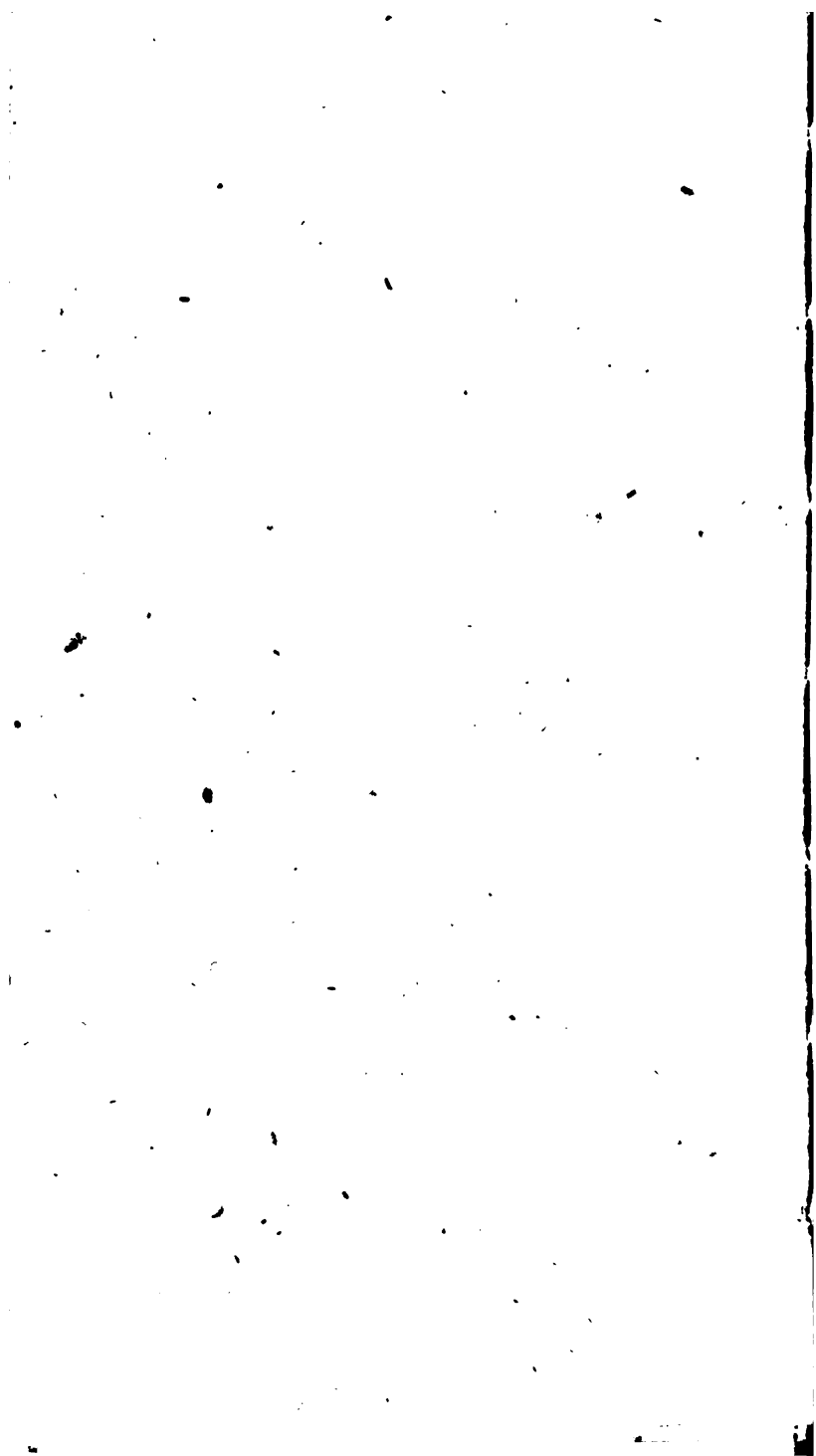
# **MONTE VIDEO.**

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**A NOVEL.**







**MONTE VIDEO ;**  
**OR,**  
***THE OFFICER'S WIFE AND HER SISTER.***  
**A NOVEL,**

**BY**  
**MRS. BRIDGET BLUEMANTLE,**  
**AUTHOR OF**  
***THE HUSBAND AND WIFE, THREE OLD MAIDS, &c. &c.***

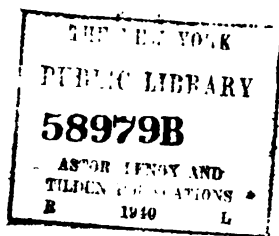
~~~~~  
**Excuse**  
A woman's frailty : where she once has lov'd,  
Strong is the passion ; and howe'er suppress'd  
In smothering embers, still the flame bursts out,  
And strives to climb above our just resentment.

**FROWDE.**

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**VOL. II.**

**PHILADELPHIA :**  
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# MONTE VIDEO.

## CHAP. I.

In highest Heav'n,  
Vengeance, mid storms and tempests, sits,  
Vested in robes of lightning, and there sleeps,  
Unwak'd but by th' incensed Almighty's call.  
Oh let not man unbid presume to take  
That dread vicegerency.

MASON.

A CONSIDERABLE time elapsed, and Lord Frederic still continued to walk to and fro on the mountain-head, with folded arms, unable to come to any determination, when raising his eyes to the opposite side of it, he perceived Captain Cummeline again hastily advancing towards him. His heart reproached him for his conduct towards that gentleman, whose kindness had certainly deserved his gratitude; and, with generous eagerness, ever ready to acknowledge an error, as soon as self-convicted of it, he quickened his pace to meet him. Horror and dismay sat upon the features of the Captain; he grasped the hand of his friend with convulsive eagerness, and in a voice, hollow and sepulchral, from excess of agony, exclaimed, "Follow me,

VOL. II.

A

*Wm. Mason 21 Mar 1940 (2.1.10)*

rash man ; follow me, and behold a scene of horror, from which an Almighty Providence has spared you the guilt of partaking—Follow me," continued he, perceiving the hesitation of Lord Frederic, "for the love of Heaven! and whenever you are tempted, in cold blood, to raise your hand against your fellow-man, remember this moment."

Lord Frederic, breathless with astonishment, followed him, in silence, several paces ; and, at length recovering himself, he said—"But whither, my friend, would you conduct me !"

Captain Cummeline stopped a moment, as if irresolute ; he gazed earnestly in the face of Lord Frederic, as if striving to read his soul ; while Lord Frederick, trembling with yet unsubdued emotion, and pale with astonishment, eagerly repeated the question.

"I believe you incapable," cried Captain Cummeline, solemnly, "I believe you incapable of exulting over a fallen enemy, and therefore am I come : Colonel Mapletort, on his death-bed, desires to see you ; if you be a Christian, you will not refuse his summons."

Lord Frederic, shuddering involuntarily, lifted his eyes to Heaven ; all the angry and sanguinary passions, which only a few moments before seemed to agitate and unhinge his frame, suddenly ceased ; in vacant astonishment he gazed on the features of his friend, scarcely knowing or comprehending the meaning of his words ; horror suspended his utterance.

"You do not speak," said Captain Cummeline ; "you do not answer : is it possible you

can refuse the request of any man on his death-bed?"

Lord Frederic put his hands before his face, to recover his recollection; "Be silent, my friend," cried he, waving his hand; "I must recollect myself:" he then walked on a few paces, Captain Cummeline following him: finding, however, he still declined speaking, that gentleman again addressed him—"You go," said he, "to visit poor Mapletort—you are, I know you are, incapable of triumphing over him:" he said this doubtingly.

"If I know my own heart," exclaimed Lord Frederic, laying his hand emphatically upon his breast, "I am incapable of exulting in the distress of any human being—I am now the friend of Colonel Mapletort, ready to render him any assistance in my power.

"Oh why do you not always think thus nobly? why do human weaknesses so often distort the native impulses of the heart? Three hours ago you had almost taught me to despise you, now I could kneel down and bless you."

"You must have felt and suffered what I have, Cummeline," replied Lord Frederic, softened, even to tears, by his last address, "ere you can form any estimate of my feelings; but of this be satisfied—it is not in my nature to insult one whom the Almighty has humbled."

Captain Cummeline held out his hand; a tear fell upon that of Lord Frederic, as he eagerly grasped that of the Captain, saying,—“We are once again friends.”

"My own brother is not more dear to my heart," exclaimed Cummeline; and, arm in arm, they hastened, as fast as possible, to the barracks.

What a scene there presented itself to the view of Lord Frederic!—the ground was marked with blood, glass bottles, tables, chairs, every thing remained in the confusion which the intemperance of the evening before had created, for every one was too deeply engaged in the events which had since taken place, to order their removal. The dead body of the Ensign, who had fallen in the morning's *rencontre*, was placed in the anti-chamber of the Colonel's apartment. Lord Frederic paused a moment, to contemplate it, and a prayer of gratitude dilated his heart, as he rejoiced that he had been spared the guilt of murder. Captain Cummeline, with the calmness of true courage, ordered some of the people to put the deranged rooms in order, and dispatched a messenger to the Commander of the Forces, informing him of these events; not forgetting to send, at the same time, a note to his wife, to assure her of his own and Lord Frederic's safety; and the time these arrangements had taken, having in some degree restored the calmness of his companion, he sent to inform Colonel Mapletort of their arrival; and in a few moments they were both admitted to his presence.

Supported by pillows, leaning on the arm of Mr. Sladden, the sick man attempted to raise himself on their entrance. The paleness of death, which overspread his countenance, for a

moment changed to a crimson flush; he covered his face with his hand, and a deep, an audible groan, extorted by suffering, for a moment prevented his utterance: recovering himself, however, he motioned the gentleman to advance, and, after many efforts, thus addressed Lord Frederic—"The follies, the vanities, the passions of human life, are about to close upon me for ever: in this painful, this awful moment, the memory of what I have been in the estimation of the world, can avail me nothing; I know, I feel, now, how far, how very far, I have strayed from the path of right, and I would, if possible, repair the errors of my past conduct. Oh, my Lord, I cannot die in peace, without your pardon—is it, can it be possible you can forgive me? Oh no! you cannot, you will not—have I not poisoned the sweet cup of your domestic felicity? have I not trifled with the peace, the happiness, the reputation of the loveliest of human beings?"

Lord Frederic was affected; he leaned against the wall, covered his face with both hands, and sobbed audibly.

Colonel Mapletort went on.—"In this awful moment, then, my Lord, it remains only for me to perform an act of justice; and, as I shall answer it before the tremendous Judge of the Universe, I call Heaven to attest my sincerity—your wife is innocent, yes, innocent as an angel, from any act of impurity with me. I acknowledge that I sought an intimacy with her, I acknowledge that I had formed designs upon her honour, but I was unsuccessful."



Lord Frederic groaned; but, rousing himself to a desperate fortitude, he supported himself; and, waving his hand, the Colonel proceeded—"The dignity of her conduct in repulsing me, the ignominy with which she treated me, roused all the bad passions of my heart, and I swore to be revenged; need I tell you I was so?—I found means to blast her reputation; I found means to convince the Earl, your father, of her guilt; and I succeeded in separating her from you."

Lord Frederick sunk upon his knees, he lifted his eyes to Heaven, he clasped his hands, but he could not speak; and once again the Colonel proceeded.

"Take, then, once more to your arms, restore to your heart, this inestimable jewel; and, oh pardon, and pity the wretch who would have destroyed her!"

"Take her to my arms!" exclaimed Lord Frederic, wildly; "take her to my arms!—Oh God, oh God!—Oh Eleanor, my Eleanor! take thee to my arms, thou suffering angel!—Oh God, that it were possible! She complained not of my injustice, she offered no defence, but, sinking into silence, suffered martyrdom on earth, to become an angel of purity in heaven! Oh Eleanor, my Eleanor, my life, my soul, my wife, I have murdered thee!"

A convulsive sigh, a loud shriek, alone announced that the wretched Mapletort understood his words; for, in that awful moment, the ethereal spirit quitted its earthly tenement; and all that remained of the being, who had once

bloomed in manly beauty, was a cold and loathsome corse.

Captain Cummeline flew to the assistance of the surgeon, who was endeavouring to raise the deceased ; but life was entirely gone.

Lord Frederic, still on his knees, knew not the event—he heard, he saw nothing. Eleanor, his murdered Eleanor, was present to his imagination ; and, in a low and inarticulate voice, he was imploring her to hear and pardon him.

Captain Cummeline, at length, perceiving his situation, and marking the vacancy of his eye, ran to his assistance ; he took his insensible hand ; he conjured him to be calm, and assume the fortitude of a man.

“Fortitude ! fortitude ! talk not,” cried he, wildly, “of fortitude to me !—my wife, my murdered Eleanor, where is she ? Oh Eleanor, my Eleanor, hear, pity, and pardon me ! Is it I ? was it I ? could it be ? impossible !”

“Recollect yourself, my friend,” said Captain Cummeline, soothingly ; “recollect yourself ; look at poor Mapletort, cold and insensible. Come with me, and leave this scene of horror.”

Lord Frederic gazed vacantly around him, shook away the arm of his friend, and again talked wildly to himself—“I, that would have died, to render her happy ! I, that—Oh God ! Oh God !—yes, I, who loved her more than my existence, was it, could it be I, who wounded her, murdered her ! Smile not, my beloved ; smile not upon me ; I deserve it not, for thou knowest I persecuted and forsook thee : and is this the end of my sufferings ? have I borne all

patiently, borne all, and for this! Oh Eleanor! Eleanor!"

He then rose from his knees; and walking silently to the foot of the bed, gazing on the inanimate Mapletort, he clasped both hands, and exclaimed—"Oh that I too could cease to feel! Ye libertines, ye men of this world, ye who steal into the sweet retreats of domestic felicity, ye who lay waste the soft flowers of innocence, and blight the early bud which time would have ripened to perfection, look at this scene; to this complexion ye must all come; ye cannot put off the inevitable fiat of the Most High; ye must answer for it. Oh that I too could rest and be quiet!"

Captain Cummeline again spoke to him, again intreated him to quit the room; conjuring him, for his own sake, to reflect.

Lord Frederic groaned audibly—"Reflect! I cannot reflect; reflection unmans me. I tell you what, Cummeline—from the moment I first knew that murdered angel, to that dreadful, dreadful one, which separated us for ever, my heart never knew a wish beyond the blessing of her affection; all that life could offer, all the terrors of death rested upon her—upon the wife I have murdered. Not even her supposed infidelity had power to wean me from her; my soul still clung to the memory of past happiness, and Eleanor, my lost Eleanor, was the constant vision of my dreams."

Captain Cummeline and Mr Sladden now both interposed; and, finding argument fruitless, they forcibly tore him from the spot; and, con-

ducting to a remote apartment, strove to calm his wandering thoughts; but all their efforts were vain, and they were obliged at length to confine him, while Mr. Sladden drew a considerable quantity of blood from his arm. A fainting fit, which succeeded the operation of bleeding, rendered him entirely quiescent; and Captain Cummeline, determined, not to leave him till he had seen the event, seated himself by the bedside; while Mr Sladden joined the numerous assembly below, for no one dared quit the spot till the necessary investigation had taken place.

## CHAP. II.

The still moon

Arose--they saw it not--cheek was to cheek  
Inclined, and unawares a stealing tear,  
Witness'd how blissful was that hour, that seem'd  
Not of the hours that time could count. A kiss  
Stole on the list'ning silence.

### SPIRIT OF DISCOVERY.

At the end of two or three days Lord Frederic entirely recovered from the bodily malady which these extraordinary events had created; but the composure of mind, which he had so long struggled to attain, was, in a moment, completely destroyed; the image of Eleanor, sick, wounded in spirit, sinking prematurely to the grave, incessantly haunted and pursued him; and he felt it as a kind of sacrilege to her memory, ever to know a second choice; his half-engagement with Cary appeared staring him in the face, as an action of criminal indulgence; and he determined to make her acquainted with every circumstance of his past life, and demand from her a release from that contract, which every feeling of his heart now revolted from fulfilling.

"If she has feeling," cried he mentally, "if she has generosity, she will not hesitate an instant; what can an union with me now promise her, heart-broken as I am, overwhelmed with anguish and self-reproach? No, she will see the necessity of freeing me from an engagement, which can no longer afford even a prospect of felicity.

Fully occupied with this design, he sat down, and wrote to her a circumstantial account of his life; and finally concluded with a confession of the deep wound the explanation of Colonel Mapletort had inflicted on his heart; and his firm conviction, that no time could effectually wear out the impression of it; conjuring her, for her own sake, to cancel an engagement with a being so eminently wretched ever to possess the power of rendering her happy;—and having dispatched his man with it, he waited impatiently for an answer.

The letter was delivered to Eleanor in presence of Lady Harriet, and, apologizing for its perusal, she immediately opened it: but who can speak her astonishment at its contents! emotion and agony half deprived her of the power of reading it: the fond, the ardent affection, which he there portrayed, stabbed her to the heart; the folly, the vanity, the levity of her own conduct, the return she had made to this boundless attachment, pierced her to the soul; all that she had suffered to reinstate herself in his affection and esteem, seemed an insufficient punishment for her offences against him; and, in trembling eagerness, she anticipated the conclusion of his history. What, then, were her sensations,

when the disclosure of Colonel Mapletort met her eye! She rose from her seat, she clasped both hands, she sunk upon her knees, and, uttering a fervent ejaculation, "My God, my God, I thank thee!" sunk, insensible, on the ground. Lady Harriet flew to her assistance; she opened her dress; she threw water in her face. The unconscious Eleanor moved not. Lady Harriet rang the bell, and dispatched some one for medical assistance; and again attempted to loosen her garments. In this effort, the alabaster bosom of Eleanor was exposed to her view, and in astonishment and terror, Lady Harriet gazed for some moments upon her friend, without being able either to think or act. Soon, however, recovering herself, she renewed her exertions, and Eleanor opened her eyes.

"Do I dream, do I dream?" exclaimed she languidly: "Oh let me close my eyes once more, and sleep for ever."

Lady Harriet pressed her hand, and forced a glass of wine to her mouth.

Eleanor could not swallow; and, after several attempts, her friend put down the glass.

"I think," said Eleanor, rubbing her forehead, "I think I had a letter—had I not? Have I been asleep, or have I really had a letter from my husband?"

Lady Harriet again offered her the glass of wine, and, with a smile, replied—"As I did not know you were married, it is impossible I can answer that question. Come, drink this, and then we will endeavour to talk."

Eleanor put the glass again to her mouth, and,

after several efforts, swallowed the wine; then, looking at her own dress with some confusion, she exclaimed—"I have betrayed myself! Oh Lady Harriet! you now see before you, the wife, the honourable wife, of Lord Frederic Montague; all my disguise is at an end. Where is my letter? where is the letter of my husband?"

Lady Harriet produced it.

"Take it, take it, my friend," said Eleanor; "read it aloud to me; I have no longer a motive for concealment; I shall be reunited to my husband; I shall be restored to his confidence; my fame is re-established."

Lady Harriet began the letter, but it was impossible for Eleanor patiently to listen to its contents; she rose from her seat, she clasped her hands, she uttered a thousand incoherences; again she sunk upon her knees, and breathed an audible prayer of thankfulness to the Almighty; then ran to Lady Harriet, and kissed both her hands in an ecstasy.

Lady Harriet still proceeded in the narrative of Lord Frederic; and having at length concluded it, she turned to her companion—"He refuses Cary Redbrook—I am lost in conjecture. For mercy's sake, child, tell me who and what you are."

"I am his wife," cried the frantic Eleanor, "his legal wife, I am Eleanor Mountstewart, his own, his own Eleanor, I am not dead—I am living—I am happy—blessed beyond the common lot of mortality!"

"That you are alive, is beyond doubt," answered Lady Harriet, with a smile; "but how



is it, how can it be possible, that you have so long disguised yourself from your husband? and pray how can you ever hope to exchange that black face for a white one? I protest I don't think your Lord can be satisfied with a dingy wife."

The servant at this moment entered the room, with the information that he had been unable to procure medical assistance; and Eleanor protesting that it was entirely unnecessary, hastily retired to her apartment, to resume her own countenance and complexion: but this she found no easy task, for, with long use, the black was literally engrained in the skin, and all her efforts to dislodge it were fruitless; time, however, she well knew, would wear it out, and she determined to keep her apartment till the renovation was complete: but to debar herself from the society of her husband, to conceal herself longer from him, neither accorded with her inclination nor her principles; her first wish was to restore the serenity of his mind and render him happy; and she determined to consult with Lady Harriet on the best mode of making herself known to him.

Lady Harriet dissuaded her from doing this immediately; she represented to her the danger which might attend the sudden discovery of herself, after the various agitations her Lord had so recently undergone, entreating her to await the return of Captain Cummeline, who would best be able to advise, and regulate the business; and Eleanor, unconvinced, nevertheless consented to be ruled. Several days, however, elapsed, and

Captain Cummeline's return was delayed, first by the investigation necessary on the bodies of the deceased, after that, to attend their interment; and, finally, by being appointed to take the station heretofore occupied by Colonel Mapletort, at the barracks near Simon's Bay.

Lord Frederic procured permission to remain with his friend; and Eleanor, in restless anxiety, beheld the moment of her happiness thus unfortunately delayed from day to day. She was not, however, insensible to the satisfaction of perceiving that this delay gave her a complete opportunity of restoring to her countenance the delicate whiteness it had once eminently possessed; and my female readers may believe, that she spared no exertion necessary for the recovery of her natural beauty: but though the wish of being lovely in the eyes of her Lord still existed, though a latent spark of vanity made her loth to relinquish those evident advantages she had received from Nature, she felt conscious that these were but secondary advantages in the opinion of her husband; she felt, that all that she had suffered for him, all that she had ventured to reunite herself to him, would for ever bind him her's; and that every accomplishment of mind she had attained, every grace she had preserved, would acquire a new charm, from the scenes through which they had mutually passed together; while the uniform exertions she had made for his ease, comfort, and satisfaction, the months she had lived with him, and entirely for him, must convince him, that every thing he had considered reprehensible in her former conduct, had

alone sprung from the inconsiderate vivacity of youth; and that a love of dissipation formed no part in her natural character, nor had a commerce with the world succeeded in depraving her.

With a degree of romance natural to her character, Eleanor now looked forward to scenes of future bliss and hope; the image of her Lord gilded every prospect, gave life to the most uninteresting occupation, and bloomed fresh beauty on every prospect; the sickly hue of discontent vanished; vivacity, energy, and animation, glowed on her cheek, and sparkled in her eye; her complexion assumed its native loveliness—the rose and the lily were blended together, each increasing the attraction of the other; and no longer fearful of disguising her sentiments, every word she uttered breathed interest and delight.

Lady Harriet was charmed with her, and looked anxiously forward to the return of her husband and his friend to the Cape, when she had premeditated a little holiday, to celebrate the reunion of these married lovers; and, in this hope, she determined carefully to conceal from Eleanor the day that event was likely to take place: for this purpose she dispatched a private message to her husband; and having learned from him when she might expect him, she on that day urged Eleanor to try on the Spanish dress which had been presented her by Lord Frederic; and declaring herself charmed with it, she requested her not to change it during the day.

Eleanor, half suspecting something, was with difficulty prevailed on; but her Ladyship, pro-

testing that she also designed having one, and that she meant to take a pattern from it, she at length complied. Nothing could be better calculated to adorn the fine person of Eleanor, and set off the brilliancy of her complexion to the best advantage; while the half doubting timidity with which she regarded Lady Harriet, the anxiety her countenance expressed, whenever the door opened, a sort of conscious expectation of some more than common incident, gave an inexpressible charm to every motion.

Evening, however, at length came, and brought with it a calm and refreshing breeze.

Lady Harriet looked at her watch; and ordering coffee to be brought to them, took the hand of her son, and inviting Eleanor to follow, strolled out into the garden; they had not, however, walked many minutes, before a bustle in the house roused their attention; and the voice of Captain Cummeline, inquiring for them, reached their ears.

An exclamation of—"Oh Lady Harriet!" burst from the trembling Eleanor.

Lady Harriet laughed, took her son by the arm, and perceiving Lord Frederic and her husband at the same moment entering the garden, she ran to meet them.

Eleanor involuntarily covered her face with her veil.

Lady Harriet, as she passed Lord Frederic, said to him—"For God's sake, my Lord, go and comfort poor Cary; she is dying to see you, and yet dares not advance a single step;" and

then, seizing the hand of Captain Cummeline, she almost forced him out of the garden.

Eleanor, silent and trembling, awaited the approach of her Lord; she could not speak, she could not move, her whole frame was agitated.

Lord Frederic, affecting a calmness quite at variance with his feelings, took her hand; he tried to speak, but his voice died away in inarticulate murmurs; the alarm of both increased. Lord Frederic at length spoke—"You have read my unfortunate history, Cary; all my misery, all my guilt, has been laid open before you; dare I, then, claim your pity?"

Eleanor sobbed convulsively—her veil covered her face.

Lord Frederic dared not encounter her eyes—his own were fixed upon the ground.

"You once, my Lord," exclaimed Eleanor, recovering her emotion, and forcing herself to speak, "you once professed to love me; surely I have done nothing to forfeit your esteem, your tenderness—Oh, deprive me not of an affection on which all my hopes of happiness rest; banish me not from your presence; you know not what you do. Look at me" continued she, raising her voice, and throwing back her veil, "look at me, and, if you ever loved Eleanor Mountstewart, behold her, now, imploring you to look up, and bless her."

Lord Frederic did indeed look up—an involuntary scream of astonishment escaped him; he started back—he gazed wildly upon Eleanor—he gasped for breath.

Eleanor sunk upon her knees before him—"My Lord, my husband," cried she, clasping his hand convulsively, "now bid me leave you—now cast me from you—now, abandon your own Eleanor."

"Gracious God! merciful Heaven! am I awake?" groaned Lord Frederic. "Eleanor, my Eleanor, does she live? Oh no, impossible! Eleanor! Eleanor! I dream—art thou not some vision of the tomb?"

"If you have any mercy, any compassion in your nature," exclaimed Eleanor, wildly, "look at me, speak to me—compose yourself and hear me—cannot you now, Montague, comprehend all the mystery of my conduct, my disguise, my dissimulation? is it not now explained? have I not followed you from England? have I not watched over you? and can you, dare you still doubt me? Oh, my Lord, punish me not beyond endurance; but while life is lent me, look up, and pronounce my pardon."

"Look at you! pardon you! Oh Eleanor," and he sunk on the ground beside her, "I am unworthy of you; it is I, I who alone require forgiveness—Oh, my wife, my Eleanor, pity me!"

Eleanor rose from her knees; she flew to him, she folded her arms round him—"If I have not forfeited your esteem, your confidence for ever," cried she, "in pity speak not thus; my own folly, my own levity, were the cause of all that I have suffered; it is I, I alone, who am guilty—Oh, my Lord, pardon and pity me!"

Lord Frederic folded her to his bosom, and wept like an infant ; he rose from his knees, put her from him, gazed at her with unspeakable rapture, and then clasped her again to his bosom. By degrees, however, these violent emotions gave way—a sweetly tender confidence succeeded—each had much to say, much to hear, yet neither was sufficiently composed to enter into a narration of the past—all was rapture and delight—a delight too mighty for expression, a rapture too full for words. The Cummelines, the whole world, were forgotten ; they saw, they heard only each other in the vast creation. Their long separation, all that had been mutually suffered, the doubts each had entertained of the affection of the other, were lost in certainty, the sweet, the animating certainty of bliss supreme. Past sorrow and anguish united in sanctifying an attachment so long tried in the school of adversity ; and each read in the countenance of the other, a delight, a confidence, a security, which, even in the first happy moments of their union, had been unknown ; nor had either an idea of the lapse of time, till Lady Harriet herself came to summon them into the house.

They found a large company assembled, which had been previously invited by Lady Harriet, without the knowledge of Eleanor, to celebrate the reunion of these married lovers.

Lord Frederic, ashamed of his undress, for he had not changed his attire since his return from the barracks, made a hasty retreat to his own lodgings ; but soon returned to the happy Elea-

nor, whom Lady Harriet persisted in calling the bride; and whose story, told by that lady, afforded infinite entertainment to the company.

Every one was forward in offering congratulations to the reunited pair; and mirth and festivity reigned throughout the mansion. A sprightly dance commenced, and it was late before the party separated.

Nor was the mirth exhibited upon this occasion confined to the principals: Lord Frederic's man, having procured a fiddle, set all the domestics dancing; and, as he quaffed the full bowl, bestowed upon him by the liberality of his entertainer, swore that "there could be no joy in singleness; that if ever he lived to get home to his own dear country, Glosstershire, he would pick up the first tight lass he could find, take a yoke-fellow, keep a pig and a cow, and live comfortable."

In the fulness of her own felicity, Eleanor forgot not those who had been instrumental in promoting it—she sent, the following day, for Captain Sterling, and having presented him a very substantial mark of her gratitude, she requested, that, on her return to England, whenever that might be, he would bring Mrs. Sterling to welcome her arrival.

Lord Frederic, too, shook hands with the honest tar, protesting that he had placed him under an obligation never to be forgotten; and, loading him with presents for his wife, they at length suffered him to depart.

To his care Eleanor also consigned her let-



ters for Constance, accompanied by one from her husband, who rapturously acknowledged the happiness in his possession, declaring in the most unequivocal terms; his entire conviction of the innocence of his wife, and his deep regret for the injustice of his former conduct.

Lord Frederic also wrote in the same style to the Earl, his father, yet without bitterness, entirely acquitting him of any blame in the affair ; and assuring him at the same time, of the perfect respect and good wishes of Eleanor towards him, recommending his infant son to his kindness and protection, and impatiently professing the happiness he anticipated, when, every past offence forgotten on both sides, he should again be able to present to him the wife of his bosom, to receive his parental benediction.

I have brought, then, gentle reader, the memoirs of Eleanor thus far. Let the warning she has afforded thee sink deep into thy heart ; let it bid thee pause in the wild career of dissipation and folly, to reflect upon the fatal effects produced by them ; let it teach thee, that virtue itself is no security against calumny ; and that to recover the esteem of the world, when once forfeited, is a far more difficult task, than to preserve it at first untarnished ; that a woman's chief praise is propriety of thought, word, and action ; and that she can rarely step out of the beaten path, without suffering for her temerity ; that the effects of gaming and dissipation can never fail to be fatal, inasmuch as both tend to harden the heart, and render

it insensible to the calls of duty and affection, insensible to the high calls of our Almighty Creator, and indifferent to those eternal rewards, which he has promised alone to those who patiently continue in well-doing.

### CHAP. III.

Day after day thy bloom  
Fades, and the tender lustre of thine eye  
Is dimm'd; thy form, amid creation seems  
The only drooping thing. Thy look was soft  
And yet most animated, and thy step  
Light as the ree's upon the mountains. Now,  
Thou sittest hopeless, pale beneath the tree  
That fann'd its joyless leaves above thy head,  
Where love had deck'd the blooming bow'r, and strew'd  
The sweets of summer.

BOWLES.

WHILE Eleanor continued at Landrenden, the active exertions which her situation and misfortunes forced upon Constance, insensibly drew her from the contemplation of her own immediate sorrows, and, by forcing her to become useful, prevented those recollections from preying upon her spirits, which had previously weighed her down to despondency: but, with the departure of Eleanor, all her cares, all her employments, vanished; her regrets, her uncertainty, her apprehensions, returned; and the silence of Maningham increased them. The common occupations of life no longer interested or amused her; a cheerless void was at her heart; and the dull monotony of her days overclouded all the natural gaiety of her temper, and insensibly added to the evils which

threatened her, by gradually undermining her constitution. To bear up against the evils of life, to support them with resignation, she well knew was the duty of a Christian, but hard is the task of self-government to the young and the inexperienced.

Constance had never known sorrow till the death of her father; she was now left entirely to her own guidance, without one friend upon earth to whom she could look up, with confidence, for advice and consolation. The world she knew only by name; and the misfortunes of her sister had painfully impressed upon her memory this useful lesson—that it is of no avail, in the eyes of the world, to be really virtuous; we must take care to appear so; that our very best actions are often liable to misrepresentation; and that a proper share of discretion can alone render every blessing of fortune, talent, and understanding, useful to their possessor, and beneficial to society. To emerge from the solitude of Landrenden, to mix with the world, was the step which presented itself to her view, as most likely to effect the recovery of her health and spirits; but without a proper introduction into life, she felt many dangers must attend her; and how to procure such an introduction, unknown and unfriended as she was, she knew not. The more she reflected upon this subject, the more doubtful was she of succeeding; and to continue in her present cheerless, uncomfortable situation, was impossible. The images of her lost parent and absent sister haunted every scene, filled every apartment; the groves were consecrated

to them—their voices spoke in the murmuring breeze. Her music, her drawing, the early morn, and the dewy eve, every change of season, every inanimate object, reminded her of them. One of them she should never again behold, on this side of eternity; whether she should ever see the other, was involved in uncertainty. Of Maningham she trembled to think; all her hopes, all her fears, all her wishes, too ardently turned towards him; and she frantically asked herself, if she ever could behold him with the eyes of a sister.

The benevolence of her character led her still forth to succour the distressed; but the satisfaction she experienced no longer gave vivacity to her spirits, or serenity to her mind; the very extent of her possessions seemed to be an accumulation of her misery, for she found herself every day involved by them in the tiresome routine of business, which wearied and disgusted her. The pleasure she had once felt, in anticipating future schemes of life, all the sweet dreams of domestic felicity she had indulged in, vanished from her view. The inexplicable mystery attached to the birth of Maningham, the unfathomable link which seemed to connect him with her family, rose continually to her memory; and though she anxiously wished to have that mystery clearly developed, she yet trembled to think that she might be too closely allied to the object of her affections, ever to unite herself to him. The character of Maningham, his disinterested generosity, the gentleness of his manners, the ardour of his attachment to her, all con-

spired to rivet the chains which bound her to him; while the apprehensions, which the pictures had given birth to, made those chains inexpressibly galling. To have formed an attachment with one within the forbidden degrees of affinity, was horrible; yet to banish Maningham from her affections, while any hope remained, was impossible. How to walk directly in the path of virtue and propriety, she knew not; the line was rigidly straight, the smallest deviation to the right or to the left, might for ever involve her in error and self-reproach; yet it was scarcely possible to remain stationary, to spend days, months, years, perhaps, in weighing the propriety of a momentary thought, word, or action, and, after all, to be dissatisfied with her own conduct.

\*In this state of restless discomposure, passed many weeks, when a letter from Maningham reached her hand; but, alas! the contents of it, while it lessened her anxieties and uncertainty, wounded her to the soul, for

Different this from every former note,  
Which Venus dictated and Henry wrote,  
Which told her all his future hopes were laid  
On the dear bosom of his nut-brown maid,  
Which often bless'd her eyes and own'd their power,  
And bade her oft adieu, but added more.

PRIOR.

A cool, a studied politeness, breathed in every line; he recommended her, since the peculiarity of their fates seemed to place an insurmountable barrier between them, to bestow those affections upon another, which, while one doubt remained

on their minds, could never render either of them happy ; he absolved her from every engagement to himself, declaring his intention of weaning himself from her by absence ; and finally concluded with imploring the Almighty to protect and bless her.

Lost in astonishment, Constance was for some time unable to collect her scattered senses ; she sat vacantly gazing on the open letter, with her head leaning on her hand, and her elbow rested on the table. Memory, at length, awoke,

*" With all her busy train,  
Swell'd into thought, and turn'd the past to pain."*

She burst into a flood of tears ; her desolate, her unconnected situation, seemed now to have attained additional desolation. " Not one friend, not one friend," cried she, " have I left in the wide world ! Oh Maningham ! Maningham ! have I deserved this ?" Again she perused the letter—Not one expression of regret, not one profession of regard, met her eye ; Maningham's rejection of her was not softened by a wish to retain her friendship ; he had coolly and deliberately bade her farewell, farewell for ever ! " And is this," exclaimed she, as the tears flowed down her pale cheek, " is this the end of my anxiety ! Surely, common decency, common propriety, demanded something more : yet what could he say ? if his sentiments are changed, surely it is better, far better, that he should break through the engagement at once : no, I wished not to bind him, I wished him not to waste his youth in a painful search of the incomprehensible being, who seems miraculously involved in my desti-

ny: but surely some consideration, some feeling, some delicacy, was requisite—it was due to my attachment, it was due to my sex; and shall I," continued she, mentally ruminating, "shall I also forget what is due to myself? shall I weakly regret a being who bids me forget him, who perhaps rejoices in being freed from an engagement, of which he was tired? forbid it, pride! forbid it, delicacy! Oh that I had power, now, to step into the world, that I might there lose all those recollections and feelings which this fatal solitude cherishes!"

By degrees these acute sensations of mortification and wounded tenderness subsided; Constance exerted herself in her usual occupations; and, by diligently employing every moment of her time, endeavoured to banish Maningham from her thoughts: but there were seasons, when no art sufficed to effect this purpose; and, after a painful conflict with her feelings, she resolved immediately to quit Landrenden.

It so happened, that just as she had formed this determination, she received a note from Mrs. Linzee, requesting to see her immediately; this was the first intimation she had had of the arrival of the family; and delighted at an opportunity of flying from herself, she hastily put on her habit, and, attended by the venerable Jonathan, rode over to welcome her into the country.



## CHAP. IV.

If ever in temptation strong,  
Thou left the right path for the wrong ;  
If ev'ry devious step thus trod,  
Still led thee farther from the road ;  
Dread thou to speak presumptuous doom.

### BATTLE OF FLODDEN.

Mrs. LINZEE was entirely alone, and Constance could not help fancying that she looked paler and thinner than ordinary : but she made no remark upon the change.

Mrs. Linzee was quite herself, all mirth and gaiety—said she intended remaining in the country only a few days, just to regulate some business, “and then,” continued she, “we take our flight for Bath. How you can isolate yourself, child, at this dreary season, in that dull old mansion of your’s, is to me amazing.” -

“I will frankly confess,” replied Constance, with a smile, “that I find not the charm in solitude which sages have represented, and that I am heartily tired of it; but the difficulty lies in emerging from it.”

"Are you really and truly desirous of quitting it?" asked Mrs Linzee.

"Really and truly, I have long wished for an opportunity of mixing with the world."

"Then pack up your finery and accompany me to Bath. Linzee will be delighted with such an addition to his family—we shall have no more dull, tiresome, matrimonial *tête-à-têtes*; and, with your face and fortune, child, in all human probability, before your return, you may put aside single blessedness, and pick up an agreeable helpmate."

"I have no desire to change my situation, I assure you," answered Constance, gravely.

"That may be, child; but when an opportunity comes, the desire will come with it; and let me tell you, between ourselves, matrimony has a thousand advantages, putting love out of the question, for his godship generally takes flight with the honey moon."

"You would not wish me to believe you, I am sure," said Constance.

Mrs. Linzee smiled—"Not exactly—Linzee has the very best qualifications in the world for husband-making—a natural gaiety, a fine person, an air of fashion, a great deal of politeness, a natural *bienveillance*, as Lord Chesterfield calls it, of manner, which makes little things great, and dwindles great things down into the little: but all men are not like Linzee."

"Then the advantages of matrimony consist chiefly in the selection of a partner?" said Constance.

"By no means; we married women have an

air of consequence, a sort of authority in these modern times, perfectly unknown to our great-grandmothers; we go where we like, do what we like, form parties, make engagements; and, while our husbands honour us with their confidence and countenance, who shall dare to comment on our actions?"

"This is a dangerous code of morality, I fear," said Constance, shaking her head.

"A morality of the new school, I presume you would say," answered Mrs. Linzee; "but a truce with moralizing—will you really accompany me to Bath?"

"If you will condescend to accept my company, I shall feel grateful for the favour."

"But can you condescend to come to us without attendants? Our house is small, and I have only one spare apartment; I am almost ashamed to propose your suffering so great an inconvenience, but necessity has no law."

"I hate being waited on," said Constance; "I have never been accustomed to it; my father was an utter enemy to form, and he would never habituate us to it."

The ladies now proceeded to arrange their intended journey; they settled to leave the country in two days, and travel post to the place of their destination; and Constance returned at night to her solitary castle, happier than she had been for many months. She had now a subject on which to occupy her thoughts; and the preparations for her journey, by carrying her out of herself, and diverting her mind, insensibly lessened the pensive dejection of her spirits.

The old nurse, on the first intimation of her intention of quitting Landrenden, lifted up her hands and eyes in astonishment—"Dear me, Miss Con. ! and will you really leave us ? and is not Jonathan, nor I, to go with you ? Lord help us ! every thing will look dull and dole-some when you are gone ; and there you will go into the world, and see strange sights ; and, perhaps, after all, come back to us, miserabler than you went out ; but, may be, Miss, you will be married to that comely fine man, who was here a little time since, and then you'll leave the old Castle for ever."

"I shall marry no one hastily, nurse," answered Constance, moved even to tears by the old woman's lamentations, and the painful recollections they occasioned ; "and be assured, that I will ever consider this castle as my home ; here I intend to live, and here I hope to die."

"Lord ! Lord ! Miss, now you make me quite *melancholick* ; 'tis not for you to talk of dying ; and to be sure this house is gone lonesome, or so, since my good master departed, and Miss Eleanor, that was my Lady, got married ; and you ought to take a little pleasure or so, because why, you will never be younger ; and then here, in this out-of-the-way corner, there are no quality to consort with you : but then, Miss Constance, I hope you wont stay long ; for, when you are gone, who will help to make possets for the sick ; or who will finish the baby-linen for the poor souls who stand in need ? and there are three expecting every day."

"I shall leave excellent stewards behind me," said Constance; "Jonathan out of doors, and you my good nurse within. I would have every thing done, the same as if I was at home; and Jonathan must write to me every week how you go on."

Nurse wiped her eyes, and set about putting the wardrobe of her young mistress in order; this was soon done, as the finery of Constance lay in a small compass; and every preparation being made, Constance set out to take leave of her humble pensioners, and to give them a parting token of her bounty.

At the time appointed, she set out to meet Mrs. Linzee at the adjacent market-town; and old Jonathan having seen her thus far, with a sorrowful heart departed.

Nothing material occurred during the journey; and at the end of the fourth day, they reached Bath in safety.

Mr. Linzee expressed himself delighted with the addition to his family, and Constance found herself quite at home.

The house of Mr. Linzee was situated in Pulteney-street; it was comfortable and commodious, well furnished, and better regulated than that of the generality of fashionable habitations.

The lively gaiety of Mr. Linzee's conversation was at all times amusing, while the never-failing vivacity of his wife seemed to throw a perpetual sunshine around her.

In the simplicity of her heart, Constance imagined that this couple had attained the very acme

of human felicity ; alas ! she had yet to learn, that they who live for the world, are often obliged to

" Carry smiles and sunshine in their face,  
When discontent sits heavy at the heart ;  
To dress the features in light smiles,  
And seem the thing they are not."

So it was with Mr. and Mrs. Linzee. Thrown early upon the theatre of action, before reason had attained strength to regulate the career of life, they had sailed wildly down the stream of dissipation and folly ;

" Like the gay birds, which sung them to repose,  
Content and careless of to-morrow's fare !"

but, alas ! not, like them, innocent : they saw the blessing they had in possession gradually shrinking from their grasp, yet neither had resolution to retreat in time ; both flew to the gaming-table, to retrieve their exhausted finances ; and unfortunately, a transient success had crowned their progress ; and ten thousand pounds, thus gained, restored to this thoughtless couple those smiles which reflection had nearly banished from their countenances. It was just at this period that Mrs. Linzee found it necessary to make a visit to the country ; and the hope of a new pigeon induced her so readily to offer her protection to the hapless Constance.

Hurried, for three weeks, from one scene of dissipation to another, Constance scarcely found one moment for reflection or consideration ; every thing was new to her, every thing forced her out of herself, and prevented a recurrence to those painful ideas which had been ever upper-

most at Landrenden ; and real bodily fatigue produced a regular slumber, which, if not as perfectly refreshing as those she had once known, served to lull the mind into tranquility.

Mrs. Linzee had, during this period, been several times very urgent with Constance to play ; but Constance, warned by the misfortunes of her sister, had resolutely resisted every importunity. But one unhappy evening, when all the world were to find Mrs. Linzee at home, she was induced, by her wish to oblige, to make one of a round table at three card loo. The stakes were very high ; but she flattered herself, that a little discretion on her part might render her neither a great winner nor loser. She had not been seated many minutes before she discovered her mistake—a mere novice in games of chance, her efforts were unequal to the skill of her more fashionable adversaries ; repeated flushes drained her purse, which had contained twenty guineas when she began to play ; and, angry with herself, yet ashamed to break up the table, by withdrawing herself from it, she cast her eyes around the room in search of Mr. or Mrs. Linzee, to borrow a small sum, to finish the amusement of the evening ; but she could see neither of them. —“My purse is quite empty,” said she holding it up in evident embarrassment.

“Oh, never mind that,” cried a little pert minx, just out of her teens ; “play upon credit ; I’ll lend you a few fish—you can settle with me when the game is over.”

Having no other resource, Constance felt herself forced to accept the offered accommodation.

tion ; but she was still unfortunate. Hurt at her own folly, she now attended less than ever to the cards ; and her losses and debts accumulated. To retrieve her losses was impossible ; and to retreat, appeared equally so. Again she looked round the room, in search of Mrs. Linzee ; when a deep sigh from behind her, roused her attention ; and, turning, she beheld Maningham. His eyes were rivetted upon her countenance, and an air of the deepest anguish sat upon his features. A convulsive start spoke her recognition. Maningham coolly bowed, and walked to some distance. Constance trembled excessively ; the room, the company, the cards, swam before her eyes ; she was near fainting.

"La! Miss Mountstewart," exclaimed the young lady who sat next her, "is any thing amiss? why, you are as pale as a ghost!"

The blood mounted in a moment to the cheeks of our heroine, so I may be permitted to call her.

"And now, I protest, you are as red as scarlet!" continued the young lady.

"I am really ill," answered Constance faintly ; "I believe the heat of the room is too much for me."

One of the gentlemen rose from the table, and procured her a glass of wine ; and, fearing to rise from her seat, and exhibit her inability to walk to the whole assembly, Constance desired she might not interrupt the game, pretended she was better ; but, saying she would settle her debts in a few minutes, she declined trying her luck again. By degrees she recovered her self-pos-



session; and Mrs. Linzee, soon after making her appearance, lent her money to settle her debts; and endeavouring to lose her embarrassment, Constance looked over the chairs of a party playing whist. Maningham, however, still continued at a distance from her; he made no effort to approach her; yet every time her eyes glanced towards him, his were ardently fixed upon her countenance; her confusion was increased by this observation; she changed her position, determined to meet his eyes no more. At the same moment she heard Maningham familiarly accosted with—"Don't you play to night, Maningham?"

"I never play," answered he, carelessly, "it is amusement enough, though of a painful sort, to see the avidity with which all ranks, ages, and sexes, crowd to the card table."

"Pray, who is that handsome girl with her back turned towards us? I think I saw you bow to her; methinks you have had amusement enough in gazing on her. If I mistake not, you were always an admirer of beauty?"

"Then I assure you, you are mistaken; admiration had no part in my feelings."

Constance trembled convulsively.

"Not but I am an enthusiastic admirer of beauty. Oh! I could gaze for ever on so fair a semblance of divinity, did not the vile passions of earth-born humanity intermingle with it to deface it; but whenever I see a lovely young creature coolly and deliberately sit down to cut and shuffle for the four honours, I prefigure to my mind the sort of wife she would make; envy,

hatred, and malice, are generally three of the dear creature's associates ; and whether the fifth honour shall remain unsullied, must depend upon the cast of a die."

" Oh fie ! you are too severe a moralist on the times."

" Nay, for that matter, the moral speaks daily for itself."

" Hush ! for God's sake, hush !" cried the stranger ; " you will not dare to preach down Folly in her own temple ; why, the women will all rise up in a body, to revenge the insult offered to their favourite. But who is that young lady ?"

" Her name is Mountstewart."

" Mountstewart : pray, what fortune has she ?"

" Not enough for her expences, if I may judge from her conduct to-night."

Constance could scarcely stand ; she endeavoured to recover her composure in vain ; and by degrees, looking over the hands of the card-players, as she passed towards the door, she at length effected a retreat, without observation ; and hastening to her own room, she threw herself on the bed, and burst into tears,

## CHAP. V.

The chariots bounding in her wheel-worn streets ;  
Her vaults below, where every vintage meets ;  
Her theatres, her revels, and her sports ;  
The scenes to which not youth alone resorts,  
But age, in spite of weakness and of pain,  
Still haunts, in hope to dream of youth again ;  
All speak her happy : let the muse look round,  
From east to west no sorrow can be found,  
Or only what, in cottages confin'd,  
Sighs unregarded to the passing wind:

COWPER.

How severe were the mental sufferings of Constance ! she had been wounded, persecuted, insulted, by the being whose esteem was dearer to her than that of the whole world. " Was it not enough," cried she frantically, " was it not enough to reject and abandon me, to deny me even his friendship ? does he add insult to injury ? Oh, too surely it was not, it could not be Manningham ! and have I, by my own inconsiderate folly, given him reason to think meanly of me ? should he not have known me better ? But it matters not. If, indeed, there really is some fatal link, which forbids our union, no matter what he thinks ; it is better, perhaps, that I have seen him really as he is—it will assist my weak efforts—it will teach me to forget him ; it is impossi-

ble I can retain a preference for one who has dared to insult me; I will, from this moment, banish him from my thoughts for ever."

Yet, so strangely perverse is the human heart, that Constance, while she resolved to think no more of her ungrateful lover, really thought of nothing else. The idea of being considered as a female gambler, which was the evident interpretation he had put on her conduct at the card-table, of having forfeited his esteem, was infinitely more terrible than the idea of his being related to her. "To regulate my affections, to reduce them to the level of friendship, to have been blessed in his esteem, to have emulated the virtues of which I fancied him in possession, would have been a task," sighed she, faintly, "perhaps difficult; but where is the difficulty which a mind governed by religion, and directed by prudence, cannot conquer? I should have esteemed him, I should have respected myself; yes, then I should have had the consolation of believing, that Providence had willed the event which separated us; I should have believed him incapable of insult and injury: but now, oh! it is too clearly evinced, that my fortune alone was the object which tempted him to address me: he would not wait an elucidation, which must eventually mar his fairer prospects. Good God! and is this indeed Maningham!"

Her reflections next turned on the proper mode of conducting herself towards him; and pride, wounded pride, all the dignity of the feminine character, roused her to resentment. If he again condescended to notice her, she would not

return his salutation. So resolved Constance ; but, even at the moment of making this resolution, her heart revolted against it ; still, however, it was made, and she determined to persevere in it.

Night passed in these painful reflections and resolutions, for, with a mind so agitated, it was impossible to sleep ; and the consequence of her vigils was, that in the morning she was too seriously ill to quit her apartment.

Mrs. Linzee paid her an early visit ; and finding her too much indisposed to rise, kindly offered to procure medical advice : this, however, Constance declined, assuring her, that a few hours' sleep would effectually re-establish her health.

" You forget," continued she, with a languid smile, " how dissipated I have been since my visit to you ; and you forget also how little I am inured to late hours : two or three quiet days will certainly do wonders for me."

Mrs. Linzee acquiesced in this opinion, apologized for being obliged to leave her, but declared that her engagements could not be put off.

Constance assured her, that being entirely alone was the very best thing in the world for her complaint, and that she hoped to be down by dinner time. With many good wishes, her polite hostess left her.

As our fair heroine had predicted, she was able to leave her apartment, and join Mr. and Mrs. Linzee at the dinner table ; where, though she could not eat, she exerted herself to appear

cheerful, and converse, if not quite as much as usual, at least without betraying the secret chagrin which preyed upon her heart; she, however, rejoiced when the carriage drew up to the door, and left her once more alone: she repeated and strengthened the resolutions she had made the preceding night; and added to them a determination of never again playing cards in a public assembly, or sitting down in a private party, where the stakes exceeded a certain sum; and, having implored the Almighty to confirm and fortify her in her resolve, she retired early to rest, with the sweet consciousness of having endeavoured to correct the errors of her conduct, and a firm conviction of his divine assistance and protection. Her sleep was tranquil and refreshing, only broken by the vociferous raps of the footmen, who, at different hours of the night, or rather morning, announced the return of Mr. and Mrs. Linzee.

The good effects of this salutary repose were evinced by her presenting herself the first at the breakfast-table. Finding, however, that neither the master nor mistress of the mansion made their appearance, she sat down to a piano, which stood in the breakfast-parlour, and beguiled the heavy moments during which she waited for them.

A full hour elapsed, and Mr. Linzee strolled languidly into the room, in his morning-gown and slippers; he started, on perceiving Constance—"I have ten thousand apologies to make," cried he, "for appearing before you,

Miss Mountstewart, in this dishabille; but I really did not expect to find you down so early."

"I should be extremely sorry to impose any restraint upon you," answered she with a smile, and looking at her watch; "it is eleven o'clock."

Linzee rang the bell, and ordered a domestic to inform Mrs. Linzee that Miss Mountstewart was down; then, turning to Constance, he said—"You look charmingly this morning—the native rose peeps forth once more upon your cheek. You will not, I hope, refuse to accompany us to-night to the Theatre. I assure you, we all felt your loss yesterday."

Constance bowed, and he continued.

"For my own part, I could find no substitute for you as a partner; and therefore joined the card-players, where I had a confounded run of ill-luck."

"Did Mrs. Linzee dance?" asked Constance.

"Oh yes; she met with an old flirt of her's, Lord John Martindale, and she danced with him, I believe, all night."

Mrs. Linzee, at this moment made her *entrée*, and the conversation became general; but a cloud seemed to hang upon the countenances of both husband and wife; and, as soon as the breakfast things were removed, Linzee retired to his own room.

When she found herself alone with Mrs. Linzee, Constance drew out her purse saying—"I am impatient to pay my debts to you, and am really ashamed of having been under the neces-

sity of borrowing at all ; I hope I will be more prudent in future."

"Oh, don't preach up prudence to me," cried Mrs. Linzee ; "I am the most improvident creature in the world : I spent fifty guineas yesterday at the auction, and have not a guinea in hand besides these you have now given me. I don't like to mention my wants to Linzee, for I find he was terribly on the wrong side last night ; so, if——" Mrs. Linzee hesitated, looked on the carpet, protested she had forgot what she meant to say ; then running to the piano, struck up a lively air ; and then turning to Constance, cried—"I would give the world for a hundred guineas."

Constance was on the point of offering them to her ; but the fear of offending withheld her.

Again Mrs. Linzee exclaimed—"I wish I could find a purse of gold ; I did'nt care, if I was forced to return it again at the end of a fortnight ; but now I am really distressed for money."

"I have a hundred pounds much at your service," said Constance, timidly ; "if you will honour it by making it convenient to you."

"Have you ? then I say you are an angel. I am more obliged to you than I can express, and will certainly pay you in less than a fortnight."

Constance hastened to fetch the money ; and Mrs. Linzee, having again and again thanked her, invited her to accompany her to the pump-room.



Constance declined the invitation, by informing her, that she designed attending her to the Theatre, and feared exerting herself too much.

Mrs. Linzee, then lamenting the impossibility of putting off her engagement, left her, when she again quietly seated herself at the piano.

Mr. Linzee's horse was soon after led to the door, and she heard him also depart.

Her employment was suddenly interrupted by the sound of voices talking rather loudly in the passage; and, fearing the intrusion of some troublesome morning visitor, she was about to quit the parlour; when a woman, plainly dressed, advanced to her, and turning with an air of reproach to the footman said—"I told you, young man, that Mrs. Linzee was at home; I was sure I saw her as I passed the window, and I must and will speak to her." Then again addressing Constance, she said—"Oh, Madam, if you did but see my poor husband and children, lying in the sad state they are in, I am sure you would pity them, particularly when you know that it is no fault of our own."

"I am not Mrs. Linzee," said Constance, in a gentle voice; "but I am willing to be serviceable to you, if I have the ability: what is it you want?" and she motioned to the footman to withdraw.

"I want nothing but what is just, Madam; and, indeed, if Mr. Linzee would but consider, that a great part of the money was laid out for him, and that every one must live, I think he would pay us."

"Pay! pay! and is it a bill you ask for? What is the amount of it?"

"It is thirty six pounds seven shillings, and my husband will 'bate two guineas, if he can but be paid now; for, indeed, Ma'am, we must starve without it. We have supplied the house, Ma'am, with pastry for three months, and never seen the colour of a guinea yet."

"And what is the matter with your husband?"

"Why, I'll tell you all, and about it, Ma'am: soon after Mr. Linzee came here, one of the women-servants fell sick, and a desperate fever she had, poor soul; and to oblige his honour, who was a good customer, my poor husband consented to take her into our house till she grew better; well, Ma'am, and there she was moved: but I am sure, if I had known what would come of it, I would have sold every rag from my back, before she should have come to us; for my husband and my three children took the infection, and there they all lie in a dying state, and I am unable to help them. Our business is all at a stand; and though our creditors have consented to wait till we can get in our debts, without money to go on with, nothing is to be done."

"But you have had advice for them, I hope?"

"Yes Ma'am, I have had an apothecary; I could not afford to go higher; but I don't see that much good comes of it; and after all, Ma'am, where's the wonder, when a man must visit three or four hundred in the same morning? some one must be neglected, and, of course, the least payer suffers for it. Oh, Ma'am, it is a shocking thing to be sick as well as poor."

When my poor husband and children were well, we contrived to rub on ; no matter how hard we fared, so we looked decent, and paid every body : but now I am quite hopeless ; if they die, I shall lose all ; and if they live, we must starve."

"Do not despond," said Constance, compassionately ; "God is too good to suffer any of his creatures to perish—honest industry will always find friends. I can do nothing for you, with respect to Mr. Linzee ; but if you will accept these two guineas, you are welcome to them. Go home, send for a physician—I will pay him. To-morrow I will call on you ; and if I find every thing as you have represented it, you shall not want a friend."

The poor woman burst into tears, threw herself on her knees, and prayed Heaven to bless her benefactress ; then rising, prepared to quit the house.

"You have not given me your address," said Constance ; "where do you live ?"

The woman put a card into her hand ; and, again repeating her blessings, departed.

## CHAP. VI.

Oh Hero ! what a hero hadst thou been,  
If half thy outward graces had been plac'd  
About the thoughts and counsels of thine heart :  
But fare thee well.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

AFTER Mrs. Sutton quitted the house, our heroine fell into a painful reverie: the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Linzee now began to be developed to her; and she half blamed herself for so soon acceding to the proposition of the latter, in accompanying her to Bath. She, however, arrayed herself to meet this fashionable couple, and attend them to the theatre; but, alas! the sprightly conversation of Mr. Linzee, and the brilliant sallies of his wife, had lost the power of interesting her, as she could reconcile neither with the injustice of their conduct to the Suttons.

Lord John Martindale, and a bold masculine Irishwoman, of the name of Colford, made up the party which met in the lobby; where Con-

stance felt herself under the necessity of suffering the martyrdom of being stared at by all the passers and repassers for full three quarters of an hour, which that lady chose to keep Mrs. Linzee waiting.

The house was exceedingly full ; the curtain drew up, and Constance prepared to give her whole attention to the performers : she soon, however, found this to be impossible ; Lord John entered into a severe criticism on the piece ; Mrs. Linzee, defended it ; Mrs. Colford rallied Mr. Linzee, and he retorted upon her ; in short, the whole party, herself excepted, seemed to have met to pass that time in the play-house, which they found insipidly tedious at home. 'They talked over the news of the day, pointed out the new-comers ; in fact, did any thing rather than listen.

Constance, finding it in vain to attempt hearing the actors, contented herself with looking at them and the company ; but her eyes soon found a spot to rest on, for in the very next box to her she beheld Maningham. He was earnestly watching her countenance, when she first perceived him ; but he immediately withdrew his eyes, affected to look towards the stage, and again rivetted his regards on her. She felt embarrassed and confused, but no motion betrayed a wish to be recognised by him ; and he, with increased stiffness, seemed purposely to avoid acknowledging her ; yet, with the eyes of an Argus, he watched her conduct during the entertainment.

To prevent his observation, Constance turned to Mr. Linzee, who sat next to her, and attempted something like conversation with him ; but the inexplicable conduct of Maningham both shocked and surprised her ; and, after a few ineffectual attempts to recover her spirits, she relapsed into her former taciturnity.

It appeared as if the sole business of Maningham was to mortify and confuse her ; he seemed to haunt her like her evil genius ; and, while he purposely avoided speaking to her, enjoyed a malicious kind of pleasure in marking all her movements. She determined, if possible, to disappoint his intentions ; and after a most uncomfortable evening, was delighted to find herself, at length, at home.

Several days elapsed, during which period she attended Mrs. Linzee from one scene of public entertainment to another. Lord John was always of the party, and sedulously attached himself to Mrs. Linzee ; while the politeness of Linzee, and his diligent wish to amuse, made him, more than ever, exert himself to render these scenes pleasing to Constance. Insensibly his address and manner towards her increased in warmth ; she felt the impropriety of it ; but, as he carefully avoided every word which could be construed into disrespect, it was impossible she could notice it.

The glowing admiration of his looks, the softness of his voice, the constancy of his assiduities, alarmed and shocked her, as she dreaded lest Mrs. Linzee should make the same observation : but that lady, entirely engrossed with the

flattery of Lord John, or the converse of Mrs. Colford, made no remarks upon the conduct of her husband; and, by leaving Constance always to his care, seemed rather to countenance than discourage it.

The qualified admiration of Mr. Linzee, at length, gave way to opportunity; his expressions of it became more frequent; and, at last, he openly avowed his attachment to her.

Constance started; a crimson flush of indignation covered her cheek; she rose, and attempted to quit the room.

Mr. Linzee seized her hand, and passionately imprinted on it a kiss; then beseeching her to hear him, he exclaimed—"Oh! why, most lovely of women, this coldness, this repugnance?"

"And why, permit me to ask in my turn," said she, indignantly, "does Mr. Linzee break the laws of hospitality, and insult me? why does he forfeit all claim to my respect and esteem?"

"Oh Miss Mountstewart," cried he, throwing himself on his knees, "pity and pardon the effects of your own pre-eminent beauty."

"Rise! for God's sake, rise! What would the world think, what would Mrs. Linzee think, should any one see you in this attitude? if any one sees you I am undone: Rise! for God's sake, rise!"

"Not till you have pronounced my pardon."

A loud and repeated rapping at the door, almost deprived Constance of her senses; and in another instant the voice of Maningham reached

her ears, inquiring for Mr. Linzee : her agitation increased—"Good God !" exclaimed she, "what will become of me ? Rise ! I conjure you, rise !"

Mr. Linzee did, indeed, obey her ; but not till Maningham had entered the room and taken a full view of his situation.

Constance, unable any longer to restrain her feelings, burst into a flood of tears.

Maningham, almost as much agitated, stammered out an apology for his intrusion.

Mr. Linzee affected to laugh—"Rather *malapropos*, I confess," cried he ; "I did not expect you so soon ; but I will fetch my hat, and attend you." He spoke this with an air of triumph, and then quitted the room.

Constance, trembling and abashed, dared not look at Maningham ; she wiped the tears from her eyes, rose, and looked from the window.

Maningham advanced towards her ; he attempted to take her hand, but she drew it from him—"If Miss Mountstewart would take my advice," said he, with an air of earnestness, "she would leave Bath as soon as possible, and return to Landrenden : the strangeness, the impropriety of her present situation, is a general subject of conversation ; the attentions of a married man cannot add to the reputation of any woman."

"Your advice, Sir, is ill-timed," replied Constance, indignantly. "As long as I know what is due to myself, I must ever feel mortified at the notice you are pleased to bestow on me ; for have I not before now been subject to



the insults of Mr. Maningham? Leave me, Sir, leave me; when I want an adviser, I will certainly send for you."

"Oh Constance! is it thus you address me? if you knew my heart——"

"Little should I get by that knowledge," said she, with bitterness, "but a painful conviction of the depravity of human nature: as it is, your advice is undesired and unnecessary."

"Undesired, because you are prejudiced in wrong; unnecessary, because you are predetermined not to profit by it."

"As you please, Sir; you are at liberty to draw your own conclusions."

"Not as I please," said Maningham, gravely; "for I would have had Constance Mountstewart still continue such as I once knew her—the first, the loveliest of created beings. Could I for a moment have credited my senses, had I then been told, that in a few, a very few months, I should have seen her initiated in every species of folly, a proficient at the gaming-table, associating with the most trifling of her own sex, and listening to the licentious vows of the most dissipated of my own?"

Constance would have spoken, but the re-entrance of Mr. Linzee prevented her; and Maningham, having coolly wished her a pleasant morning, quitted the house with that gentleman.

Constance was about to retire to her own room, when the voice of Mrs. Linzee arrested her attention; she endeavoured to collect her spirits to meet her; and in a moment, attended

by Lord John Martindale and Mrs. Colford, she entered the room. "I am come to fetch you, Miss Mountstewart," cried she; "Linzee told me you was alone, and you must come with us to the milliner's. I want fifty thousand things, and there is a load of new finery just come from town."

"I am really ill," said Constance, "and would willingly be excused."

"Oh, but we can't excuse you, my dear," cried Mrs. Colford; "we want you to give your opinion; we want you to buy too; for, positively, you must attend us to the ball. Come, do fill your purse with cash, and come along with us."

"Perhaps Miss Mountstewart may think beauty unadorned, adorned the most," said Lord John, gaily; "and who that sees her, will not be ready to coincide in that opinion?"

"A compliment to Miss Mountstewart at the expence of the company!" exclaimed Mrs. Linzee.

"I protest, Colford, we ought to punish his Lordship for that speech; suppose we run away from him, and leave him *tête-à-tête* with Miss Mountstewart?"

"By no means; I will attend you instantly," answered Constance rising; "I will slip on my hat in a minute."

Mrs. Colford burst into a violent fit of laughing, called her my Lady Sensitive, assured her Lord John would not eat her, that there was no cause for apprehension, and a thousand other things equally as ridiculous; while Constance,

really terrified at the fear of being left alone with his Lordship, whose self-confident assurance was perfectly disgusting to her, hurried up stairs as expeditiously as possible.

"Let us leave Lord John to conduct her to us at Miss H——'s," said Mrs. Colford; "it will terrify the poor girl out of her senses."

"What an exquisite *tête-à-tête*!" cried Mrs. Linzee; "I hate the idea of female precision; it seems to cry out, 'Touch me not; my name's Temptation.' If I thought you would make love to her, I should be half tempted to leave you."

"Perhaps she would not understand me, if I did," replied his Lordship.

"Ha! ha! ha! not understand you—that's a mighty pretty joke!" exclaimed Mrs. Colford; "is your Lordship so very incomprehensible? or do you think Miss Mountstewart so vastly different from her sex, not to understand a declaration of love? I swear that is the best joke I have heard these twenty years."

"Perhaps you do not know how to make one," said Mrs. Linzee, with an air of archness.

"Will you venture to try me?"

"Me! oh, my conscience, I have forsworn love. Am not I married, man? and is it possible to preserve one of Cupid's links, when it has done nothing but burn, burn, burn, for these last three years?"

"Will you please to set out, good people?" asked Mrs. Colford; "we shall be a day after the fair, if you do not make haste. Miss Mountstewart," continued she, "are you ready?"

Constance, drawing on her glove, declared herself quite so ; and they then set out on this expedition, Lord John offering his arm to Mrs. Linzee, and Mrs Colford walking by the side of Constance.

Arrived at Miss H——'s, all the fresh importation of finery was turned over. Mrs. Linzee ordered every thing, tried every thing on, protested every thing was charming ; chatted, flirted with Lord John, asked his opinion ; insisted on Mrs. Colford's accepting a cap ; persuaded Constance to purchase ; laughed at her own folly and extravagance, wondered what Linzee would say to it, and then put her hand into her pocket to take out her purse, when, suddenly starting back, she exclaimed—" Was ever so giddy a creature ! I protest I have left my money at home. Pray, what does it come to, Miss H—— ?"

" Twenty pounds seven shillings."

" Well, send in the bill ; you shall have it to-morrow."

Lord John offered his purse.

" You are a good creature," cried she, taking it from him ; " return with us to dinner, and I will pay you ;" and, without farther ceremony settling the demand, she quitted the shop, ordering the things to be sent home immediately.

## CHAP. VII.

How far that little candle throws his beams!  
So shines a good deed in this naughty world.

JEW OF VENICE.

HAVING attended her party to the Pump-room, Constance there apologized for leaving them; and then turned her steps to the humble mansion of the honest and industrious Suttons, whom she had visited several times since her first interview with Mrs. Sutton.

Every thing about the invalids proved too plainly the story she had heard; while the neatness and regularity that reigned in the habitation, convinced her at once of all the merit due to the mistress of the family, and at the same time filled her bosom with an ardent wish of benefiting her.

She found them all upon the recovery, yet still very weak and languid; while the countenance of poor Mrs. Sutton betrayed evident

marks of languor and debility, and evinced too plainly, that she could not bear up for any length of time against the fatigue which she had daily to encounter.

Constance noticed her pale looks, told her this was no time for œconomy, advised her to hire a nurse, and, putting twenty guineas into her hand, bid her use them without reserve.

The poor woman fell on her knees, and besought the Almighty to bless her benefactress. "Oh Madam," cried she, "how unlike you are to the world!—so young, so generous, so kind! Night and day will I pray for you—you have saved us all from death; yes, we will all pray for you: it is impossible we can ever reward you, but God will—yes, God will everlastingly bless you."

"I believe I shall leave this place," said Constance, "in a few days; give me pen, ink, and paper, and I will write down my direction for you; when your children are able to undertake the journey, let your husband bring them down to me; change of air will quite restore them all, and their absence will give you time to recover your own health."

Again Mrs. Sutton called upon God to bless her; said she was quite an angel; and, producing the implements for writing, asked when she intended to leave Bath.

Constance informed her, that she was not yet fixed as to time; and, putting the direction into her hand, she hastily quitted the house, to avoid hearing her farther expressions of gratitude. Light of heart, she then pursued her way

home. Lost in the most pleasing reflections on the happiness she had been so fortunate as to bestow, her face was irradiated with a smile of ever-blooming beauty; and as she walked towards the habitation of Mr. Linzee, she several times repeated to herself—"Oh! it is ten thousand times more blessed to give than to receive. Never, oh my God! never let my heart be insensible to the calls of humanity. What am I, more than these children of misfortune, that I should be blessed above them? Oh, sanctify to me the uses of prosperity, and give me fortitude to endure smaller evils with patience!"

So quickly had passed the time while conversing with Mrs. Sutton, that she found, on her return home, that she had scarcely time to dress before dinner; and hurrying to her own apartment, she began the necessary business of attiring herself for the ball; which having speedily accomplished, she descended into the drawing-room, to meet the company who were expected to dine with the Linzees, and attend them to the amusement of the evening. While the door was yet in her hand, she heard the voice of Linzee exalted above its usual tone; and paused, considering whether it would be proper to enter.

"I tell you what, Mrs. Linzee," cried he, vehemently, "I have no money for you; and if I had, I do not think your conduct deserves it."

Constance, apologising for her intrusion, was about to quit the room, when Mr. Linzee rising, placed a chair for her, and making a low bow to his wife, hoped he should next see her in better temper; and he borrowed a few smiles from Miss

Mountstewart ; and then, with another obeisance to Constance, he left them together.

"I protest I think the fellow is quite out of his senses," cried Mrs. Linzee, angrily: "I will be judged by you, Miss Mountstewart, whether any woman was ever so ill used as I am. Not a single guinea will he give me, though he knows how much I stand indebted to Lord John ; and what do you think is the reason, the strange reason he assigns for his conduct ? what, I will only ask you to guess ?"

"It is impossible I can form an idea," said Constance ; "and pardon me, Mrs. Linzee, if I say I have no wish to know. Matrimonial disputes are best confined to the persons concerned in them ; for, whichever party is to blame, both must suffer in the opinion of the world by a disclosure of them."

"Lord ! Lord ! why, I should hardly have expected such a sage piece of advice from my great-grandmother : but set your heart at rest, child ; it is no secret—it can't be a secret ; Mrs. Colford and Lord John both know it ; and Lord John advises me to take revenge on Linzee for his folly."

"You can hardly have made a confidant of his Lordship, I presume," said Constance, with an air of reproach ; "men are dangerous confidants, particularly to married women."

"Nay, as to that matter, I could not well conceal it, for Linzee behaved absolutely rude to Lord John, when he met us together this morning, as if a woman could not be decently civil to



one of the other sex, without provoking the jealousy of her lord and master."

"If you have the slightest idea of Mr. Linzee's being jealous of Lord John, you would do well, I think, to drop his acquaintance."

"How can I do this, when I owe his Lordship a hundred and twenty guineas; and how could I mention this to Linzee, without confirming all his suspicions, and subjecting myself to his abominable reprimands?"

Constance involuntarily shuddered; she would immediately have offered Mrs. Linzee the sum in question, but she recollected, that the former sum lent to that lady, her benefaction to the Suttons, and her own immediate debts, which she must settle previously to her quitting Bath, would entirely drain her purse, leaving her scarcely money sufficient to reach Landrenden: she looked at Mrs. Linzee with concern—"I cannot assist you," cried she, "for, indeed, I have no money left, barely sufficient to carry me to Landrenden, whither I propose going the day after to-morrow."

"Will you then intercede with Linzee for me?"

"I should be shocked at the presumption of making a request to Mr. Linzee, which I knew he had before refused to his wife."

"But he will not refuse you. Oh, Miss Mountstewart, you know not, you cannot think, what I now suffer: I stand upon the brink of a precipice; if I do not pay Lord John, I am undone; Linzee's unkindness, his Lordship's importunities, my own weak folly, all contribute to my destruction."

"Importunities!" exclaimed Constance, more shocked than ever, "importunities! of what nature? dare he, dare he insult you with improper importunities?"

Mrs. Linzee arose in confusion; she attempted to speak, but the words died inarticulately upon her lips; and the servant at the same moment announcing Lord John Martindale, she advanced to the door to receive him.

Constance scrutinised her countenance while receiving his compliment; but she could gain no information from it; the usual air of studied politeness and gaiety sat upon it; the same volubility characterized her language, the same volatility her conduct; while she herself felt awkwardly embarrassed at the memory of the conversation which had just passed between herself and Mrs. Linzee. She would have quitted the room; but to expose her weak friend to the libertine importunities of Lord John, well disposed as she appeared to be to them, militated against every principle of her heart: and, unable to join in their conversation, she sat painfully ruminating on every possible means of saving, spite of herself, this daughter of dissipation and folly.

Several gentlemen and ladies made their appearance, amongst whom were the master of the mansion and Mrs. Colford, and they were almost immediately summoned to the dinner-table.

Linzee was quite himself—every trace of chagrin had vanished from his countenance—his manner to Mrs. Linzee wore the same *bienséance* it was accustomed to do; and Constance

saw, with increased indignation and surprise, how easily dissimulation and disguise sat upon the countenances of both husband and wife.

The ball passed without amusement to Constance; she declined dancing, because Linzee made the first offer of becoming her partner; and forcing herself into conversation with Mrs. Colford to avoid his assiduities, she painfully waited the moment of returning home.

Mrs. Linzee, notwithstanding what had passed, suffered herself to be led out by Lord John; and the earnestness with which he conversed with her during the pauses between the dancing, the air of coquetry which played upon the features of Mrs. Linzee, the whole conduct of both, half convinced Constance, that her efforts to save and restrain the latter would be ineffectual. Yet, with the genuine beauty of virtue, she determined that she would not relax in her efforts, and that conviction alone should induce her to withdraw them.

At breakfast, the following morning, she publicly declared her intention of quitting Bath.

Mr. Linzee heard her with astonishment; intreated her to revoke her cruel design; and turning to his wife, he said—"Come Caroline, second my efforts to prevail on Miss Mountstewart."

"I am half tempted to ask Mrs. Linzee to bear me company," said Constance.

"You may ask, I believe," said Linzee, with a sarcastic sneer; "but unless you consent to take Mrs. Linzee's cecisbeo with you, I fear you will not succeed."

"There you are mistaken, my sage lord," answered Mrs. Linzee, with tartness; "for I was never more inclined in my life to disprove your assertion. Only wait three days, Miss Mountstewart, and I will quit Bath."

Mr. Linzee stared incredulously; Constance looked gratified; and Mrs. Linzee continued—"Pack up your clothes, my dear, and we will away to the shades, leaving all our cares and vexations behind us."

"Meaning me, I presume?" asked Linzee, rising carelessly from the table and quitting the room.

"Are you really serious?" inquired Constance, addressing Mrs. Linzee; "will you accompany me to Landrenden?"

"These deplorable debts," exclaimed Mrs. Linzee, "alone prevent my leaving Bath. How, how can I possibly satisfy them? That devil of a fellow, Lord John, swears he will be paid; and as Linzee seems determined not to assist me; why, I believe I must assist myself."

"How?" asked the terrified and gasping Constance.

Mrs. Linzee burst into a loud laugh. "There are things in the world, child," answered she, "which I could easily part with, without the knowledge of Linzee; my jewels, for instance, some of the family plate, or another jewel, on which he appears to set little value."

"Do not talk thus, for Heaven's sake, Mrs. Linzee; I would not have any human being hear you for the wealth of the universe."

## CHAP. VIII.

So fare we in this prison-house, the world :  
And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see  
So many maniacs dancing in their chains :—  
They gaze upon the links which bind them fast,  
With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot,  
Then shake them in despair, and dance again.

COWPER.

CONSTANCE was hardly satisfied with herself for thus disposing of so considerable a sum ; yet the hope that by so doing she might give the thoughtless Mrs. Linzee time for reflection, in some measure consoled her ; that it would be the last she could so appropriate, was also an additional subject of consolation. At Landrenden she should resume her usual occupations ; she should no more find solitude irksome, for had not the conduct of Maningham entirely weaned her from the attachment she once entertained for him ? Yet, while she endeavoured to convince herself that she no longer loved him, a soft sigh rose in her bosom, and she mentally vowed never to unite herself with any other. “God forbid,” exclaimed she, “that I should nourish an

attachment which virtue will not sanction ! God forbid that I should still feel even a lingering partiality for one who has dared to insult me ! I could have been happy, contented, never to have seen him more ; I could have rejoiced to behold him blessed, even if united to another : yet I wished to retain his friendship, to have afforded him my esteem ; and this, even this he denies me."

Mrs. Linzee forgot not the appointment with the notary ; she called on Constance to fulfil her engagement, and both sallied out together. The man of law was punctual, and a few minutes settled the business ; but Constance could not help feeling mortified at the idea of taking up money, notwithstanding the praiseworthy motive which induced her to do so. She coloured, trembled, and hesitated, and could scarcely hold the pen to put her signature. Mrs. Linzee, as they left the house of the attorney, rallied her on her confusion, protesting that if she had been signing her marriage-settlements, she could not have been more agitated.

" Perhaps not so much," said Constance, endeavouring to recover herself ; " for I shall certainly never sign those, without the clearest conviction that I am doing what both reason and conscience approve." She was about to have said more, when, as her hand rested on the railing which defended the flight of steps leading to the house, she perceived some one in the act of ascending, and turning, she beheld Maningham. Actuated by the same motive, both moved to the opposite side, to make way for each other. Maningham coolly bowed.

Mrs. Linzee, laughing, accosted him familiarly with—"Heigh, Maningham! business or pleasure?"

Which he, retorting with equal familiarity, replied—"And only business, I am sure, could carry Mrs. Linzee so early to the house of a lawyer."

"You must wear the willow now, I'll assure you," said Mrs. Linzee; "for Miss Mountstewart has just signed, sealed, and delivered the marriage-settlements."

"Good God, Mrs. Linzee!" exclaimed the agitated Constance.

Maningham turned his eyes expressively towards her, a look of anguish seemed to pierce from his intelligent countenance; he placed his hand on his heart, and, in a tone of solemnity, exclaimed—"Whoever is so blest as to receive the hand of Miss Mountstewart, will want no man's good wishes; to offer mine to her, would be an insult, for the blessing she bestows can never be undervalued!" and then, with a low bow, he stepped forward; and knocked at the door.

"The willow in good earnest, if I may judge by his countenance," said Mrs. Linzee, again bursting into a laugh. "Well done, Sentiment! Pray, Miss Mountstewart, did he not once make you an offer?"

"You must pardon me, if I refuse to answer that question," said Constance; "though, in justice to Mr. Maningham, I think I may say he possesses too many advantages to be lightly rejected by any woman."

"True," answered Mrs. Linzee, "putting the obscurity of his birth out of the question; for it is generally believed, that he is entitled to a Fitz or a Mack. Some great man's offspring, no doubt, or he would not be so well provided for."

Constance felt confused, and Mrs. Linzee went on—"I hope in Heaven that limb of the law will not tell him our business, for I should like, of all things, to make him believe you are about to resign your liberty."

"I had rather, almost, that he should think so," said Constance, with an increased feeling of mortification, "than that he should know the truth; for, with such an income as I have, what must be his opinion of me, if he knew that I exceeded it?"

"Oh! he would only think you like the rest of your sex. But, perhaps," and she looked archly in the face of her companion, "you would wish him to think worse of you, or, perhaps, a vast, vast deal better. Well, I protest, blushing becomes you."

Constance, who still held the bank bills she had received of the attorney, rolled up in her hand, now presented them to Mrs. Linzee, saying—"For your own sake, Mrs. Linzee, I implore you to make a proper use of them. As you value your own peace of mind, your honour, your reputation, dismiss Lord John from your acquaintance immediately. Let Mr. Linzee never think, even for a moment, that you can hesitate to comply with any request of his; the



bonds of matrimonial confidence are soon broken, and it may be impossible to reunite them."

"There must be an end of every thing sublunary, child," answered Mrs. Linzee, gaily; "but, to shew you that I purpose keeping the silken chords of Hymen unbroken, I will stay this whole day at home; I will even devote it to preparations for our journey to-morrow. I will settle with Lord John, take my leave of fashion, by peeping at the ball in the evening, and then hie away to the shades."

Pleased to hear this determination, Constance endeavoured to recover her own serenity; and both ladies returned home together, after having paid several morning visits. Mr. Linzee dined out, and the remainder of the day was devoted to preparations for the journey.

Mrs. Linzee now appeared to enter into the scheme of quitting Bath, with an alacrity which even astonished Constance; and she began to think it might be possible to withdraw her from the frivolous pursuits which had hitherto engrossed her attention; she was now perfectly convinced, by her readiness to relinquish the society of Lord John, that she had received his attentions, merely from the weak vanity of being an object of admiration; and she rejoiced in having been an humble instrument, in the hands of Providence, to withdraw her from so dangerous an amusement.

The fatigue of packing, and the restless feelings of disappointed affection, which, spite of herself, would intrude to harass and distract the mind of Constance, kept her waking the greater

part of the night. The strange conduct of Manningham, his unaccountable neglect, how could she reconcile either with the warmth with which he had spoken at their last interview? and more, how could she reconcile that warmth with the accusations with which he had so lately insulted her ears?—"Oh! too surely," cried she, "his commendations were but an added insult; he meant only to give a deeper stab to my too sensitive bosom, by praise, of which he thinks me undeserving. Well, no matter; I shall soon, very soon lose sight of him for ever; and I will rest satisfied in the acquittal of my own conscience: I will return to the peaceful retirement of Landrenden, and there, in the performance of my duty, seek consolation."

In the morning she found herself too ill to rise; and determining not to exhaust herself before the commencement of her journey, she sent an apology to Mrs. Linzee for her nonappearance at the breakfast table; and soon after had the satisfaction of hearing the master and mistress of the mansion go out. She then rose, and put on her travelling dress; and, hoping a little fresh air would relieve her, sallied forth to pay the few debts she had contracted during her residence in this scene of dissipation; and having quietly accomplished this purpose, she returned again home, determined to resist every importunity of quitting it, till the moment of her departure for Landrenden, which had been previously fixed with Mrs. Linzee to take place at ten the following day.

When the lady had finished her perambulations for the morning, she exultingly informed Constance, that she had settled her debts to Lord John. "And now," continued she, "for the ball, with not one care upon earth."

Constance looked reproachfully at her; and, after a momentary silence, asked if she did not think it would be more prudent to husband her strength for their intended journey?

Mrs. Linzee laughed at the idea—"It is the last madness I can be guilty of: after to-morrow, every thing will wear a new face. Linzee, even you, will be astonished at the change to-morrow will bring forth. He will be pleased, I am certain; whether you will partake and share his satisfaction, remains yet to be proved."

"I wish I could make you a reasonable being," said Constance; "you have an excellent understanding, if you would but condescend to use it."

"I never have used it to any good purpose, I confess: before I knew the value of liberty, I threw my own away; before I was conscious of the value of Dame Fortune's gifts, they also vanished from my grasp."

"But it never can be too late to mend," said Constance.

Mrs. Linzee shook her head—"There are moments in my existence, when I sigh to unburden my heart to some one; there are moments when I almost wish myself annihilated; and there have been moments, fatal, irretrievable moments, which I would die to recall. If I have only resolution to pass this night as I would, as

I ought to pass it, all may be well. I am divided against myself, and nothing on earth can save me."

"Do not quit the house to-night," said Constance; "the struggle to part with these follies will then be over. I can claim your promise to accompany me; and, as Mr. Linzee does not appear to disapprove of your design, what can now prevent your putting it in execution? nothing, permit me to say, but a blamable weakness on your part. And what are the pleasures to which you sacrifice your own and your husband's happiness?"

"Oh, pray do not trouble yourself about Linzee's happiness: he has long ceased to seek or find happiness with me; the gaming table now occupies his sole attention: and of all the fine fortune which I brought him at our marriage, the house and estate in the country alone remain; these he cannot touch, for even I myself cannot alienate one article of the furniture."

"Would it not be wise then to endeavour to draw him from his pursuits, and fix your residence in the country?"

"I am no magnet, and his heart is iron: but a truce with moralizing. I have scarcely time to dress before dinner. Linzee has offended me beyond forgiveness, nor does he seek to conciliate: if I could bend him, all might be well; but, as it is, the fates will have things their own way, and the aggressor must answer for consequences."

## CHAP. IX.

There be, perhaps, who barren hearts avow,  
Cold as the rocks on Tornoe's hoary brow ;  
There be, whose loveless wisdom never fail'd,  
In self-adoring pride securely mail'd ;  
But triumph not, ye peace-enslaver'd few ;  
Fire, nature, genius, never dwelt with you !  
For you no fancy consecrates the scene,  
Where rapture utter'd vows, and wept between ;  
'Tis your's unmov'd, to sever and to meet ;  
No pledge is sacred, and no home is sweet.

### CAMPBELL'S PLEASURES OF HOPE.

MRS. LINZEE, at the appointed time, set out for the ball, and Constance was left by herself, Mr. Linzee having previously joined the party with whom he usually spent his evenings. Constance took her tea, read for a couple of hours, in a book she had purchased to beguile the tediousness of her journey, and then quietly sought her bed : but a painful presentiment of something evil, effectually precluded the possibility of sleep ; the words, the manner, the agitation of Mrs. Linzee, which was but too apparent, notwithstanding her endeavours to conceal it, all filled her with apprehensions, with suspicions of too dreadful an import even to be confessed to herself. She listened, in trembling eagerness, for her return ; hour after hour, however, stole away, and

she came not. Constance reiterated her prayers to the Almighty, to guard and protect this thoughtless being; and, at length, wearied with watching and previous indisposition, she sunk into a profound sleep, which lasted many hours. From this, however, she was at length awakened by one of the house-maids, who, out of breath, entered her apartment, at seven o'clock, exclaiming, "There's a sad piece of work down stairs, Madam; my mistress has not been home all night; and there's my master cursing and storming, as if the very devil was at his heels."

"And where is Mrs. Linzee?" asked the astonished and terrified Constance, starting from her bed, and hastily dressing herself.

"The Lord in Heaven knows: we have sent all over the town to look for her: she left the ball-room last night, they say, very early, with Lord John, but nobody can tell what became of them; however, it seems rather strange. Mrs. Wait, my mistress's maid, is gone too, and all my mistress's boxes."

"And when did Mrs. Wait leave the house?" asked Constance, in increased terror.

"Why, about ten last night, some person sent for her, and away she went; staid two hours, and then came back, and had all the boxes carried off, for she said they must go by a waggon into the country; and she said, you must not know it, Ma'am, for you would, perhaps, object to it, and it would be very incommoding in the chaise."

"And where is your master?"

“ Why, he’s rantipoling it all over the place, at every inn, to know which way they are gone; for, to a certainty, she is gone off with Lord John; and I don’t believe he’s got a sixpenny piece in the world to go after them; for Peter, his valet, says, that he lost five hundred golden guineas, last night that ever was.”

Constance had by this time thrown on her cloaths; and, without promising herself any information from the effort, yet too much agitated to think calmly, she rushed into the drawing-room, threw up one of the sashes, and looked up and down the street, as if she expected to meet the eye of Mrs. Linzee in every passenger; until at length awakened to the impropriety of her own situation, by the observation she attracted, she suddenly drew back in confusion.

Her own removal from the habitation of Mr. Linzee, which the elopement of Mrs. Linzee had rendered doubly necessary, now occupied her thoughts; and, requesting the housemaid to put up the few things which yet remained unpacked, she impatiently waited the arrival of the chaise which was to convey her towards Landrenden.

The little she had seen of the world, the painful circumstances she had encountered since her residence in it, the perfidy and duplicity of Mrs. Linzee, and the fashionable infidelity of her husband, all sickened Constance from a commerce with it; and she impatiently longed for the moment when she should quit it for ever, and return once more to those scenes of peaceful industry, where her early years had been passed.

She wrote a note to Mr. Linzee, informing him of her purpose to pursue her journey, and endeavouring to dissuade him from seeking the fugitives; and this she designed should be delivered to him after her departure; she therefore committed it to the care of the housemaid, ordering her to deliver it on his next appearance; and the chaise soon after drawing up to the door, her trunks were corded on, and she was in the very act of entering it, when she felt her arm suddenly seized, and turning, beheld Maningham.

"Where are you going?" said he, in a tone of the most impassioned interest. "Constance, dear Constance—Miss Mountstewart—you must not quit this place; I have something of the utmost importance to communicate to you. Will you step back into the house and afford me half an hour's attention?"

Constance, in confusion, hesitated—"I scarcely know what I ought to do," answered she; "I am placed in a most delicate situation; I would, if possible, conduct myself properly, but I am really bewildered."

Maningham took her hand—"Confide in my honour; believe me, I would forfeit my existence, to save you one moment of pain; return with me to the house, for, indeed, I have much to say to you: the happiness of your whole life depends upon this moment."

Constance suffered herself to be persuaded, and they entered the house together. Maningham led her to the parlour, and offered a chair, but she declined seating herself; and, endeavouring to recover her self-possession, yet, at the same time,



preserving all the openness and sincerity natural to her character, she addressed him with—"And now, Sir, may I request your communication? may I also express my astonishment, that, after I have received so many and repeated insults from Mr. Maningham, after having been accused of the most shameful vices by him, he should thus pretend to interest himself in my happiness and welfare?"

Maningham, with his arms folded, pensively looked upon the ground while she was speaking; and as she paused, he raised his eyes to her face. A melting, a dying tenderness, seemed to pervade every feature. The soul of Constance was penetrated with his emotion; a convulsive sob rose in her bosom, as his tremulous voice uttered—"Oh, Constance! I am a bad dissembler—I claim your pardon—I deserve your pity. Listen to me patiently, then, oh, most beloved of women! while I breathe before you all the secrets of my heart." Constance had neither strength to move, nor voice to speak; and he went on—"The unfortunate letter which I imagine to be your first subject of accusation, was dictated by the purest motives of disinterested affection—I felt it unmanly to bind you to a half-engagement, which neither might ever have power to fulfil, and I preferred sacrificing your esteem to your happiness. I felt it prudent to break every tie between us, because by one tie alone would my frail nature ever consent to acknowledge you."

Constance raised her eyes for one moment to his face, and then again fixed them on the carpet, in mournful expectation.

Maningham walked about the room, in seeming irresolution, and then continued—"Nothing but the peculiarity of my situation should now have compelled me to break silence: yet how shall I apologize for my late conduct? shall I tell you, that hurt to find you an inmate of Mr. Linzee's habitation, mortified to see you waste your time and your talents ignobly, I felt myself irritated against you? What, then, were my sensations, when I beheld Linzee at your feet! Could I," and he endeavoured to read her sentiments as he spoke, "could I imagine, that, living in the house with Mr. Linzee, I had broken in upon the first moment he had been favoured with your undivided attention? or could I suppose, that, without some previous encouragement on your part, the most professed libertine would have dared to cast himself at your feet?"

Constance covered her face with both hands; she sobbed convulsively, exclaiming—"Good God, what an accusation! I must for ever hate and despise myself, for being the subject of it. And is this all you have to say, Sir? have you sought me only to offer me fresh insult, and degrade me in mine own eyes? Do I live, do I live to hear all this? and are you, of all human beings, the man who dares speak it?" and then, retreating towards the door, she continued—"But I should deserve all this, and more than this, could I submit to the indignity of your society. Oh Maningham! had you only permitted me to esteem you, I had been most blessed."

Maningham flew to her—he caught her hand—he sunk upon his knees—"You must not, you

shall not quit me. I renounce all my suspicions ; I believe, I believe you innocent. Forgive me ! oh, forgive me !”

Constance haughtily desired him to rise. “ A new subject of suspicion may attach to my character,” cried she, resentfully, “ if any one sees you in this position : rise, Sir, I intreat.”

“ Not till you speak peace to my soul, by pronouncing my pardon.”

“ I am not angry,” said Constance, again bursting into tears, and wringing her hands, “ but I am heart-broken. If those who ought best to know me, can so cruelly misinterpret my conduct, what will, what do, what can the harsh and unfeeling world say of it ?”

Maningham, in his turn, sobbed audibly.

Constance continued—“ The improper conduct of Mr. Linzee had induced me to fix my return to Landrenden previous to the unfortunate event of this day ; you must now, Sir, suffer me to fulfil that design without farther interruption.”

“ And you leave me in resentment !” said Maningham, still forcibly detaining her : “ where is the gentleness I have been wont to see in Constance Mountstewart ? I make no claim upon you—I dare make none ; yet, if the purest, the most affectionate brotherly love—if my unbounded esteem—if all that I have suffered, all that I still suffer, can induce you to pardon me, surely you will not leave me in displeasure. Is your heart so really hard,” continued he, rising, and drawing her towards him, and earnestly gazing in her face, “ are you so

much changed, that you cannot pardon? Oh, Constance! tell me, for mercy's sake, tell me that you do not hate me."

Constance still wept—"Alas!" exclaimed she, "I cannot hate you. Oh, Maningham! is there upon earth so desolate a being as I am? who wants an adviser more, and who so friendless? But I must go—every moment I stay increases the seeming impropriety of my conduct."

"I came here to request you to postpone your journey," said Maningham; "to point out reasons why it should not be undertaken, and to appear indifferent, where every affection of my heart was centered; but I found it impossible. Yet I wish you would now relinquish your design of quitting Bath; I wish you to appear in public, to obtain the sanction of some respectable character, lest the misjudging world should include you in the guilt of Mrs. Linzee, by imagining you the partner of her flight."

Constance started—such an idea had never presented itself to her before.

Maningham continued—"Pardon the sincerity with which I now speak: Mrs. Colford has given it out, that Linzee's improper attachment to you, his design of immuring his wife in the country, where his contiguous estate rendered your secret intercourse easy, was the inducement which determined Mrs. Linzee to abandon her family."

Constance lifted her hands and eyes in silent astonishment—the paleness of death overspread her countenance—her tremulous frame could

scarcely support itself—she leaned against the door, without being able to speak.

Maningham went on—“ You cannot now, therefore, leave Bath, without furnishing scandal with an opportunity of being busy. If you go to Landrenden, the contiguity of Mr. Linzee's estate will confirm Mrs. Colford's suggestions; it will also subject you to the intrusion of Linzee, if he chooses to importune you. Nor can you change your present residence, without leaving a doubt on the mind of the public. You must, my dear Miss Mountstewart, for your own sake, consent to brave the world, and, by a constant appearance in public, confute all the slander of your enemies.”

Constance sighed deeply—she held out her hand to him, in token of reconciliation—he pressed it to his lips. All the kindness, the consideration of his conduct, burst upon her view in a moment; all the value of so disinterested a friendship sunk into her heart; and, in a tone of familiarity, she asked if he knew any human being willing to afford her protection?

“ I have been particularly serviceable in some law business to Lady Jane Mackey; and I am apt to think, from particular circumstances, that she will not refuse any request of mine, if she can possibly comply with it. Will it be agreeable to you to reside under her protection for a short time? Her age, her character, her rank, will be effectual benefits to you, in the eye of the public, if you can only consent to put up with a little old-maidish formality.”

Constance expressed her gratitude; but Ma-

ningham silenced her by declaring, that he was the obliged person ; and having ordered the luggage and chaise to be kept in waiting till his return, he hastily quitted the house, to prefer his intended request to Lady Jane.

## CHAP. X.

Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears,  
The plaintive voice alone she hears,  
Sees but the dying man.

### BATTLE OF FLODDEN.

HE had not been gone many minutes, before Mr. Linzee entered the room, heated with his ineffectual endeavours to discover the route of the fugitives.

Constance was too much agitated, by all that had recently passed, to speak to him. He flung his hat upon the table, and taking a brace of pistols out of his pocket, seemed to be putting them in order for use.

Constance shuddered ; she attempted to speak, but her words died away in inarticulate murmurs.

"Miss Mountstewart !" exclaimed he, starting, as if he had then first perceived her, "are not you gone ? Oh, true ! I recollect the chaise waits for you at the door. So Mrs. Linzee is

gone—damn her ; but Lord John shall feel my vengeance. Now it is too late to pursue them—but a time may come ; yes, it must, it shall.”

“ Endeavour to recollect yourself, Mr. Linzee,” said Constance, softened by his apparent distress ; “ remember what is due to the world and yourself ; take not into your own hands that retributive power which belongs to your ‘Almighty Maker ; it is for him only who is without fault, to cast the first stone.”

“ You are an angel,” cried he, with animation, “ you pity me. Oh, had my wife been like you, how happy, how supremely happy had I been ! now, now all is over ; I am a ruined man ; yes, Miss Mountstewart, ruined beyond redemption.”

“ I hope not,” said Constance, emphatically.

“ You hope not !” exclaimed he, catching both her hands, and looking earnestly in her face ; “ you hope not ! Listen to me : all that I possess in the world belongs to Mrs. Linzee ; her estates I must give up, for so runs the tenor of her damn’d father’s will ; and the adulterer, the cursed adulterer, will riot in the spoil of my possessions : to her sole and separate use, in defiance of all future contracts, are her estates left : I have not a doit upon earth.”

“ Have a little patience ; for God’s sake,” said the agitated Constance, endeavouring to withdraw her hands ; “ the very misfortunes which you now lament, may be instrumental to your future happiness.”

“ Preach patience to the winds,” cried Linzee, frantically ; “ I have no such tame despicable



virtue. Here's my resource ;" and, letting both her hands fall, he reached one of the pistols from the table, where he had placed them—" This is for Lord John," continued he, vehemently, " that is for myself."

" Reflect, reflect a moment," said Constance, terrified at his violence ; " rash man, forbear ! what will become of your soul, your immortal soul ? Oh ! pause upon the brink of eternity, lest the awful, the irremediable gulph open before you ! What would you do ? what would you do ?"

Linzee once again put down the pistol, again he caught her hand, and sunk upon his knees before her—" If you will promise to be mine, to become my wife, I will be calm, I will be patient, I will be all you wish."

Constance averted her head, exclaiming—" Rise, Sir, rise ; is this a time, is this a season for such folly ? Put the pistols by, and resolve to act like a man. For shame, for shame ! Did your Creator send you into the world, thus, thus to act, in defiance of every principle of virtue ? Rise, Sir, rise !"

Linzee still held her hands—" By the immortal God who made me——"

Constance interrupted him—" Oh ! do not profane his name, by using it to the vilest of purposes. Let me go ! let me go ! I am terrified almost to death."

" One of us must die, if you do not consent," said Linzee, with a horrible imprecation ; " I am desperate ! Swear to unite your fate with mine, or, by Heaven ! I will blow my brains out——"

Nor shall you triumph in security ; both pistols are charged, and since murder must be the end of the business, the wider the havoc, the greater will be my revenge. What is the world to me ? I have done with it—I shall soon be dust. I will scatter my brains to the four corners of the world, and then sleep for ever."

The trembling Constance sunk upon her knees, expecting every moment to be her last ; she had no strength to move, her teeth chattered, her joints shook under her.

Linzee pointed the muzzle of the pistol towards her, and appeared to enjoy her terror ; then laughed convulsively, walked across the room, and then, seizing the other instrument of mischief, paused.

Constance, in a state of mental insensibility, knelt before him, with her eyes fixed, and her hands uplifted ; despair sat upon her countenance, and her very form seemed congealed.

Linzee apostrophized the pistol—"Thou instrument of comfort," cried he, "of sweet repose, the wretch's hope, here let me hug thee close !" and, unconsciously catching the ideas and words of the sublime dramatist, he continued—"To die, to sleep, no more ! and by that sleep to end the heart-ach, and the thousand natural pangs, which flesh is heir to." Again he pointed one of the pistols towards the nerveless Constance ; and then, throwing it violently from him, he rushed out of the room.

A pause, a dreadful pause succeeded ; but, alas ! it was momentary ; in another instant the report of a pistol resounded through the mansion,

and "My master, my master has shot himself!" was echoed from different parts of the house, by at least ten voices.

Constance would have risen from the ground, but her strength was unequal to the effort; she leaned her head on a chair, and groaned convulsively; she endeavoured to call some one to her assistance, but the power of speaking was denied her, yet she could distinctly hear all that passed.

The servants ran different ways in search of assistance.

The people from the street, as idle curiosity or motives of humanity directed them, entered the habitation; some surveyed the mansion, and made audible remarks upon its magnitude and furniture, others helped themselves to different articles of value, while all seemed to agree in the opinion that life had for ever departed from the frail frame of Linzee.

The chaise still waited at the door, with the trunks of Constance attached to it; but the driver was in the hall, diligently conversing with the lower female domestics, who, having recovered from the first shock, occasioned by the rashness of their master, now huddled together, to talk over a concern in which self was exclusively involved. "And who is to pay us our wages? what is to become of us now? we must seek fresh places. Was ever so shocking a thing heard of? he ought to have paid us first," formed a new chorus to this lamentable tragedy.

Maningham at length, with a countenance which might almost have rivalled Constance's in

paleness, entered the house; the wild looks of his beloved, her disordered dress, her statue-like face, terrified him. He gently raised her from the ground, and placed her in a chair; but her fixed eye filled him with agony. He attempted to sooth her; she looked earnestly in his face, and, rubbing her forehead, said—"Indeed I could not help it; all this violence might have been prevented; but then nobody tried but I."

"Do you not know me, Constance?" asked Maningham; "do you not know me? speak, my dear, dear Constance, speak."

Constance sighed deeply—she raised her eyes to his face with a sweetly-tender confidence—"How good you are, thus to pity and sooth me! but pray, pray take me away from this house; there has been blood, there has been blood, but I had nothing to do with it."

Maningham felt a pang at his heart—an icy coldness seemed to freeze through his veins; he gazed on Constance with agonizing delight; she was beautiful, even in her wildness; the fair simplicity of unadulterated nature sat upon her open countenance; while the full flush of feeling, that first blossom of the mind, which is rarely preserved after a commerce with the world, seemed to shed a more than mortal radiance around her.

"Will you not now go with me, Constance," asked Maningham, "to the house of Lady Jane? the chaise still waits at the door."

"Go with you!" cried she, looking earnestly in his face, "yes, to the earth's verge; but there was a time when you, even you, spoke ill of me: well, something must certainly be wrong, for I

believe, I am sure, I am very miserable. Oh ! if my poor, poor Eleanor was here, she would pity me."

"Poor, poor Eleanor ! she is quiet," sighed Maningham.

"Oh ! no, no, no," answered Constance ; "her bosom is, like mine, agitated by storms and tempests—like that tempestuous ocean on which she has embarked her destiny. My Eleanor, dear, dear Eleanor, why are you not here ?"

"This is mere frenzy," cried Maningham, falling at her feet ; "Constance, my Constance, recover your recollection ; look at me—do not kill me with your words ; give me your hand, and let me conduct you to the chaise. Lady Jane has consented to receive you : do not delay ;" and he then carried, rather than led, her out of the house ; and having placed her in the chaise, he drew up the blinds ; and jumping in, ordered the driver to convey them to Queen-square, where Lady Jane resided ; and during the short ride, he had so far succeeded in composing her agitated spirits, that she had entirely recovered her recollection ; her tears flowed freely, nor did he offer to interrupt them, well knowing the relief they afforded.

## CHAP. XI.

I live in an inverted order ; they who ought to have succeeded me, are gone before me. I am alone. I am stripped of all my honours ; I am torn up by the roots, and lie prostrate on the earth.

BURKE.

LADY JANE received her with an open and friendly cordiality, which did honour to her own feelings and heart ; she insisted on her immediately retiring to bed, and dispatched one of her domestics for a physician ; and accompanying Maningham into the parlour, she learned from him the horrid circumstances which had occurred since the morning ; and, with a benevolent interest, seemed to enter into all the sufferings which such a scene must have produced on a mind of sensibility, young and inexperienced in the world.

Lady Jane Mackey was the daughter of a Scotch Peer ; she had been in her youth remarkably handsome, and having received every advantage of education, was expected by her fa-

ther to form some splendid alliance, which would contribute to the aggrandizement of the family, which consisted only of one son, and this daughter, who was to become the sacrifice of her brother's grandeur. All that œconomy could suggest, all that parental tenderness could lavish, was bestowed upon this son, the future Earl of Glenrouverie; and his hapless sister was condemned to force her way in the world by the help of her own merit, and that beauty which Dame Nature had bestowed upon her.

Lady Jane felt the cruel distinction which family pride and hereditary prejudice made between those who had the same claim upon the natural tenderness of a father; she felt it severely, yet she fondly loved her brother; and having received, from nature and education, no small portion of the inherent pride of her race, she sedulously exerted herself in attaining all those graces and accomplishments which were calculated to adorn her rank, and give lustre to her beauty: but, alas! the idea of settling herself for life formed no part of her wishes. A romantic temper, a soul enthusiastically ardent, and a heart tender and affectionate, was not likely to mate for wealth. Lady Jane looked round the world for a kindred soul; she sought admiration, she sought devotion, in the man she should select for a partner, to be the sole and undivided object of his care, his thoughts, and his wishes.

Several respectable alliances were proposed to her, and rejected, when fortune presented to her view Colonel Mackey. He was a younger brother, of a good family, but without wealth. The

graces of his person, the fascination of his manners, made an instant impression on Lady Jane ; while he, attracted by her beauty, by the eclat of carrying off a prize so much admired ; attracted also by the hope which her being an only daughter presented of a fine fortune, and the promotion which the interest of the Earl might procure for him, assiduously sought her society.

The Earl of Glenrouverie no sooner perceived the intimacy, than he determined to put a stop to it. He spoke to the Colonel, and, in very peremptory terms, commanded him to desist ; but this only increased the danger of his daughter, by involving her in a clandestine intercourse ; during which the Colonel so well prosecuted his suit, and obtained so decided an interest in the heart of the lady, that she consented to a private marriage.

For a time the romanticness of his stolen interviews with his bride, the warmth of her attachment to him, and her extreme beauty, lent a fervour to his passion for her, which overcame the natural bias of his selfish soul : but her situation having at length made the discovery of their secret connection necessary, he found himself obliged to confess his marriage to the Earl. That nobleman received the explanation with astonishment, for so well had the secrecy been preserved, that he never once suspected it ; and then, endeavouring to recover himself, he coolly bade him take home his portionless wife. In vain Lady Jane threw herself on her knees—in vain she wept and intreated—he was inexorable ; she was dismissed immediately from his household.



and compelled to accompany her husband to lodgings unfitted to her rank, or the accommodations she had been accustomed to.

The real character of her husband now began to unveil itself to her; the sordid selfishness of his narrow soul was no longer restrained; he set out to join his regiment, taking her with him, and reducing her, by his own extravagance, and the parsimoniousness of his allowance to her, to perform with her own hands many of the ordinary occupations of her domestic establishment.

A few, a very few weeks, entirely dissipated all the airy fabrics which the youthful Lady Jane had erected of love and happiness; the fine edge of affection was turned, by the rough stroke of harsh and unfeeling authority; every difficulty was increased and embittered by the reproaches and unkindness of her partner, and every deprivation doubled upon the hapless sufferer, because the private expenditure of the Colonel had rather increased than diminished since his marriage; her situation, which called for indulgence and tenderness, was pointed out to her as a reason for new economy and greater exertion; while every effort was expected to be made by that party least accustomed to hardship, most delicate in constitution, and worst fitted, by nature and education, to sustain it.

There is, perhaps, no evil in nature more insupportable to a delicate mind, than the necessity of asking for pecuniary assistance, even from those whose duty it is to supply it.

Lady Jane waited from day to day, in the expectation of her husband foreseeing the necessa-

ries which her situation required, and voluntarily bestowing them upon her; but, entirely engrossed by self, he either thought not of them, or, if he did think, purposely withheld them from her. The little stock of ready money which she had possessed when she quitted her father's mansion, had been long spent in purchasing the necessaries of life; for the Colonel, spending his days with the mess, never once troubled himself to inquire how his lady lived at home, or thought it at all necessary to provide for her, or his family, which, however, consisted only of two servants; and Lady Jane at length quietly set about altering her own wardrobe, to make preparations for the expected stranger.

A premature accouchement, however, happily prevented her from an accumulation of domestic sorrow; and her unfeeling lord openly rejoiced in the circumstance, exclaiming—"There will be one less to provide for."

The year following, however, he was less fortunate, and Lady Jane had the felicity of clasping to her bosom a beautiful girl, whose soft and innocent smile seemed to repay her for all that she had suffered, and bind her to an existence which had, for the two past years, been one of accumulated suffering and endurance. She had frequently written, during this period, to her father; but her letters of submission and duty had been uniformly returned unanswered. This she had concealed from her husband and from the world; alas! she had to conceal from the latter all the severity of her destiny, and, with a fortitude which would not have disgraced an ancient

Spartan, she did struggle, and conceal it. Now, however, the birth of her daughter forced her to act, and for her sake she expostulated with her husband on the hard and sparing stipend allotted her: what she would have died rather than ask for herself, the welfare of this dear child induced her to demand; but her demand only produced insult and mortification—she was told, that every part of the fortune she had brought should be at her own disposal.

The labour of her little household increased, and the patient exertion of Lady Jane increased with it; her delicate frame experienced many severe shocks; but youth, a good constitution, and a sincere reliance on Providence, enabled her to support them; her strength seemed to increase by use; and while the decay of her beauty evidenced the hardships she encountered, the strength of her mind acquired new vigour from every mental exertion; her daughter grew into a companion, and the formation of her youthful heart formed a fresh source of matronly comfort; while the instruction of her, in every feminine accomplishment, filled up every moment of time unoccupied in household arrangements.

The Colonel continued still the same, if possible, more selfish and unjust; for it is the natural consequence of vice to grow by indulgence; he was petulant and self-willed; and his gentle daughter often divided with her patient mother his unnatural neglect, or more unnatural anger; yet each were blest in the soft sympathy of one another, each watched the moment of softening the pang which unkindness had inflicted, and

each patiently suffered deprivation to bestow an added comfort on the other.

Lady Jane never mixed with the world ; she formed no acquaintance, she made no friends, for she trembled lest a moment of confidence should unburden the painful secret which she had so long laboured to conceal ; she endeavoured to impress the young mind of her daughter with respect even for the faults of her father ; and both shrunk from every idea of their discovery, as fearfully as if they had been themselves to blame for them.

Each, by turns, became the assiduous nurse, or the labouring slave of this cruel and malicious task-master, as situation and circumstances required ; and, while the misjudging world commented upon the strange characters of Lady Jane and Miss Mackey, and wondered how the Colonel could support an existence with such a stupid pair, they endeavoured, in the performance of a hard duty, to find the christian consolation of well-doing, and sought only the approbation of their own hearts, and the approval of the Almighty.

A sudden illness, at length, cut short the career of the Colonel. Lady Jane wept for him, not, indeed, for the loss of a kind and tender husband, but in the fear that he who had through life performed no duty punctually, except that of viewing and reviewing his regiment, and commanding it, when necessary, in the face of his country's enemies, should, after death, be consigned to the fate of unprofitable servants ; while her gentle daughter accompanied the tears of her

mother, from the melancholy impression which a deathbed never fails to produce upon the nerves of the tender and compassionate, and because that to see her mother weep, always filled her heart with sorrow.

The death of the Colonel, however, produced one good to them—the Earl of Glenrouverie wrote to his daughter, assigning her a pension during his life, and promising to portion her daughter, and leave herself handsomely in his will, provided she formed no second alliance, and Miss Mackey consulted him in the disposal of her person.

This proposal was cheerfully acceded to by both mother and daughter: the one determining never again to shackle her freedom, the other hoping never to form an attachment while that mother lived; both fondly anticipating the comfort of ease and affluence, and the blessing of enjoying it together.

Miss Mackey now began to mix with the world; her education was finished; her person displayed all those graces which had once conspicuously shone in her mother's, and soon became a general object of admiration. She had many advantageous offers, and, at length, one which met with the entire approbation of herself and mother, and one to which it was impossible the Earl, her grandfather, could object, as the gentleman was distantly related to his own family, bore the same name, and was a Baronet; Sir Charles Rouverie had, therefore, permission to apply to the Earl for his approbation.

The Earl cheerfully consented, settled an estate on his daughter, Lady Jane, for her life, to

revert, after it, to her daughter and Sir Charles, who had agreed to reside with Lady Jane, during the summer, every year; and they all went together, to take possession of their new acquisition, which was situated in Scotland, to inspect the state of the house, order the necessary repairs, and visit the Earl of Glenrouverie, for the first time since the marriage of Lady Jane. All these purposes were accomplished; the Earl was perfectly reconciled to his daughter, pleased with Sir Charles, and really proud of his grandchild; and, after three very pleasant months, this happy trio set off for London, to buy furniture for the new house, and to purchase wedding-cloaths, carriages, &c. for the bride-elect.

But how vain are the hopes and expectations of mortals! Miss Mackey suddenly caught cold, her tender constitution was affected, her lungs became ulcerated, and every alarming symptom threatened a decline.

Sir Charles insisted the ceremony which was to unite them for ever should take place immediately, and the melancholy nuptials were solemnized; the whole family then set out for Lisbon.

A warm climate, the best advice, the most zealous attention, all that a most tender affectionate mother could do, all that a passionate lover could effect, only palliated for a time the progress of this fatal malady; it had taken too deep root to be eradicated; both watched its progress in agonizing apprehension, both sedulously strove to snatch this lovely victim from the arms of death; but the fatal fiat had gone forth, and soon,

very soon she was to be taken from them, to join her kindred angels in the land of spirits.

But her patience, her resignation, her wish to console and support them—the ardency with which she recommended her mother to the protection of her husband—the affectionate manner in which she conjured them to let her death form a bond never to be broken between them—the gratitude she expressed to that mother, for all the kindness she had shewn her—the energy with which she hung upon the bosom of her husband, and besought him not to sorrow as one without hope, as she assured him his kindness, affection, and sympathy, softened to her even the pangs of death, that she had no regrets at leaving the world, but what arose from being separated from them—all taught them, that a being so eminently virtuous, could be no sufferer in the change she was about to experience; while her bodily pains, which no art on her part could conceal from them, at length reconciled them to the thoughts of parting with her.

A sweet smile irradiated her countenance in her last moments; she clasped a hand of each of those beings whose kindness had meliorated her pangs, and one bright beam of recollective intelligence shot from her eye; it then closed for ever upon earth and its cares: yet the smile still beamed upon her motionless face, as the anticipating harbinger of never-ending glory.

Lady Jane and Sir Charles wept not; they had a grief at heart too mighty to overflow. At the bedside of their united treasure they knelt down; each clasped a hand of the other, each

fixed an eye of unutterable anguish upon the bed where all that endeared them to life lay stretched and inanimate. Lady Jane at length spoke,—“My son, my son,” exclaimed she, “thou, who wast in life the choice of her whom my heart mourns, from this moment thou art mine. Oh! my son, my son, what was there in beauty which she possessed not? what was there in virtue which she knew not? Oh, my child! my child!

“From the first Cain to him who did but yesterday expire,  
Sure never was so fair a creature born!”

Sir Charles rose from his knees, and rushed out of the room.

By degrees, however, the grief of both became more reasonable; they found comfort in in talking of their lost treasure, in cherishing her memory, in hearing and relating every circumstance which either could recollect, till insensibly the matronly Lady Jane devoted her whole heart to this son of her adoption; and he became really as much attached to her as if he had never known another parent.

Lady Jane completed the repairs of her house in Scotland, purposing to retire thither, and occupy it for the short remnant of an unfortunate life; when she hoped to resign her spirit into the bosom of the Creator, leaving all her possessions to this son of her choice. The death of the Earl her father, however, drew her once more into the world, for, with a degree of caprice frequently incident to old age, he had,



just before his demise, taken offence at his son, and, when his daughter no longer wished for it, or wanted it, had left her a princely fortune. Lady Jane gave every part of it up, except that estate which had been originally designed for her; and, in the transaction of this business, her first acquaintance with Mr. Maningham commenced.

Sir Charles Rouverie was still in London, settling some affairs of consequence; and, till he could leave England, Lady Jane had determined to remain in Bath.

## CHAP. XII.

Peace follows virtue, as it's sure reward.

COWPER.

I HAVE felt it necessary to enter into the leading circumstances which formed the character of Lady Jane, previous to her introduction upon this theatre, my history, as she will be hereafter a considerable actor upon it. The memory of her daughter, chastened by time, and corrected by religion, lent a pleasing shade of melancholy to her manners and conversation ; and while she preserved the most enthusiastic attachment to every inanimate thing which once belonged to her, she yet retained a more enthusiastic attachment to Sir Charles Rouverie, for he had been the cherished object of that daughter's mature affection. Sir Charles's partiality was certain always to draw her's after it ; and for Sir Charles to be disgusted with any thing, was a sufficient reason for her to dislike it ; the sole business of her life was to watch over the health, and promote the happiness of Sir Charles. The opinion of Sir Charles appeared now the polestar by which she guided her life, so engrossingly

was she attached to him; and this enthusiasm formed her happiness.

It has been observed by some one, I think Sterne, that to have something to love, is necessary almost to existence; and insensible must that heart be, which can find no object to attach itself to; every pleasure is increased by participation, every sorrow is consoled by sympathy, and every joy returneth tenfold to the bosom which delighteth to bestow happiness.

True benevolence expandeth, like a wide stream, into ten thousand different channels; it flows from the fountain of divinity, and man is most blessed in the power of blessing. To shut up the heart against all the soft sympathies of nature, to live only for the gratification of self, is to be avaricious of the chief riches of humanity: so was not Lady Jane; all those gentle affections, which the cold chill of unkindness had, in the early part of her days, confined to her own breast, had found rest on the bosom of her angelic daughter; and when she was removed to a brighter region, the objects she had loved seemed still to represent her; and to see her son-in-law blessed, was now the sole business of her life.

The agitation which had, at their first interview, almost distorted the fine features of Constance, gradually wore away; and when she left her apartment to meet Lady Jane on the succeeding day, that lady was astonished at the change a few hours had produced; she gazed upon the pale face of her protegee with an earnestness which could not but be observed by Con-

stance, and which she felt it necessary to account for; she took the hand of Constance, and, while tears filled her eyes, she exclaimed—"Wonder not that I thus gaze on you, for you remind me of one inexpressively dear to my heart—you are so like my lost daughter, that I can never be tired of looking at you."

Constance kissed the hand of Lady Jane. "May I flatter myself," cried she, "that the likeness will insure me your friendship? for, indeed, there is no one in greater need of a friend than I am; no one more desirous of deserving friendship: but, from a strange coincidence of circumstances, no one who has fewer claims upon the world."

"Then let us, from this moment, supply all the deficiencies of nature to each other," said Lady Jane: "I shall, from henceforth, consider you as my daughter."

Constance was about to reply, when the entrance of a servant prevented her; he delivered a letter to each, and then abruptly retired.

"I use no ceremony with my daughter," said Lady Jane, opening her letter; "and I trust she will use none with me."

Constance bowed, and, in her turn, opened her letter; it was from Maningham, and ran thus:

"MY INESTIMABLE FRIEND,

"HAVING seen you safe, under the protection of a woman of virtue and honour, which I hope you will not rashly quit, I feel myself under the painful necessity of bidding you fare-

well. Oh Constance! that such a necessity should still exist, or that I could confine my feelings towards you within reasonable bounds! To see you happy, is ever the first wish of my heart; and since I am forbidden to aspire to that pre-eminence I once looked forward to, can I, dare I, ought I, to wish to retain any hold upon your affections, but such as a beloved sister bestows upon a truly-attached brother? No, so you are happy, no matter who forms your felicity; so I would fain flatter myself I can think, dear Constance. Forget me, forget my rash hopes; bestow your invaluable heart upon a more worthy object: and may all the blessings earth can lavish rest upon you, dearest, best of women.

F. MANINGHAM."

"Mr. Maningham informs me," said Lady Jane, putting down her letter, "that he is obliged to quit Bath without bidding us farewell; he is a man of business, so I presume we shall not see him again for some time."

Constance's eyes filled with tears; she turned from Lady Jane, to conceal her emotion. Lady Jane, however, did not, or would not perceive it; she called a fresh topic of conversation, and, by stealing the mind of her young friend from the images which heavily oppressed it, by degrees restored her to composure.

A fortnight passed, during which Constance partook with Lady Jane in all the amusements of the place. Lady Jane appeared quite contented, and every day expressing her satisfaction at the

companion she had thus acquired; while Constance could not be insensible of the kindness and attention she received; all the stiffness of Lady Jane's manner wore off by degrees; and, at the end of this period, both appeared as perfectly acquainted as if their whole lives had passed together.

But the secrets of her past life, all that pertained to Eleanor or Maningham, were locked up in the bosom of Constance, in her heart of hearts, never to be disclosed to the eye of day: yet, in the silent hour, when sleep steals over the senses of the gay and happy, she would fly from her pillow, and, as she gazed upon the pale luminary of night, image to her mind the forms of those she most loved, wandering far distant from her view, perhaps indulging similar retrospections with herself. Should she ever be so happy as to see them more? would the veil of mystery which shadowed the fate of Maningham ever be withdrawn? or was she doomed to pass through life, with all

*"Her board of sweets, a solitary fly!"*

for she was determined never to marry while the mystery remained unfathomed, or while Maningham was at liberty.

She had received Eleanor's first letter from Falmouth, and the consolation it afforded is not to be described—she was in the same vessel with her husband, under the protection of a man of worth and integrity; and Constance mentally offered up her heart in thanksgiving to the Almighty, for the benefit thus conferred.

The arrival of Sir Charles Rouverie enlivened the little circle of Lady Jane, for Constance could not but acknowledge, that he well deserved the partiality her protectress felt towards him ; his person was uncommonly elegant, his manners interesting, and his understanding of the first class ; while his benevolence of character, the attention he paid Lady Jane, the respectful familiarity with which he addressed her, all seemed to speak that serene satisfaction of the mind

“ Which goodness becoms ever.”

Lady Jane now talked of returning to Scotland ; and Constance felt a regret at the idea of once more inhabiting her own solitary castle at Landrenden ; yet, not daring to propose accompanying her protectress, she made preparations for her journey : while Lady Jane, trembling to part with a friend so newly acquired, yet unwilling to propose that she should quit her native land to accompany her to her retirement, saw these preparations in silence.

“ How much Lady Jane will have to regret,” said Sir Charles, addressing Constance, “ her journey to Bath ! the loss of so charming a companion will render her own mansion insipidly tiresome ; and what can a dull bachelor like myself promise in recompence for what she thus resigns ?”

“ Reverse the picture, if you please,” said Constance, affecting an air of gaiety, “ and imagine a young creature, like myself, just separated from a cheerful family and social converse,

to be immured in a solitary castle, in the north of Wales, reigning sole mistress of the mansion, with only domestics to speak to."

"Suppose, for the sake of variety, you take me with you to your solitude," said Sir Charles: "I will obey you implicitly."

"It would be stealing from my benefactress her sole source of comfort," said Constance, looking at Lady Jane, with a smile. "You cannot afford to part with your son, Lady Jane, can you? beside, I can have no hope of keeping you in any reasonable order; perhaps you would usurp the dominion, and turn traitor."

Lady Jane looked at Constance—"Are you afraid to set your foot in Scotland, Miss Mountstewart? or will you venture upon secluding yourself six months with an old woman?"

"Heigh ho! so I am nobody," cried Sir Charles, rising from his seat, and bowing to Lady Jane: "how shall I express my obligations to your Ladyship, for thus kindly considering me? A man of my age often finds his account in being considered by the ladies nobody: but as I am, in truth, so mere a non-entity, do, Miss Mountstewart, take pity on my poor mother, and do not suffer her to rusticate alone."

Lady Jane smiled, and he continued—"Nobody will intrude upon your solitude, nobody will accompany you in your walks, and nobody will be gratified in shewing you every bold and beetling cliff, every fine prospect in the neighbourhood."

"Dear Lady Jane," said Constance, laugh-



ing at this rattle, "are you really serious? shall I not intrude upon your time? is it really your wish that I should bear you company?"

"If I thought such a wish was not incompatible with your own ease and comfort," replied Lady Jane, "I would venture to say how ardently I long for your society."

"And if I had not been fearful of intruding on your Ladyship's retirement, I would myself have solicited the pleasure of attending you."

"The society of my daughter can never be intrusive," said Lady Jane, with an expression of more than kindness. "Sir Charles, take the hand of your sister, and from this moment we will be one family."

Sir Charles, with an air of arch gallantry, kissed the hand, which Constance familiarly held out to him; and Lady Jane quitting the room at the same moment, he said—"How shall I sufficiently thank you, Miss Mountstewart, for your attention to this best of women?"

"And how shall I express my gratitude," said Constance, "for the kindness of Lady Jane towards me? Oh! Sir Charles, you know not what it is to be an orphan—all the riches of the world cannot compensate, to a heart like mine, for the loss of domestic society."

Sir Charles seemed to feel this appeal; he however, affected to laugh at her gravity; and, leading her to a piano, insisted on her singing herself into spirits; and Constance, wishing to oblige him, suffered herself to be persuaded.

## CHAP. XIII.

In peace, love tunes the shepherd's reed ;  
In war, he mounts the warrior's steed ;  
In halls, in gay attire is seen ;  
In hamlets, dances on the green.  
Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,  
And men below, and saints above,  
For love is heav'n, and heav'n is love.

### LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

AT the end of the week this united trio set off on their journey to Scotland ; Constance having first written to Jonathan, to inform him of her intention, and demand a supply of cash for her future exigencies, which she ordered him to send, with her letters, by the post, to the house of Lady Jane, which was situated about ten miles from Edinburgh, and six from the famous castle of Roslin.

Nothing material occurred during the journey, which highly gratified Constance, as every place through which they passed was quite novel to her ; and, after their entrance into Scotland, formed so striking a contrast to those manners and customs she had been used to, that her curiosity was continually excited ; and as to

gratify her seemed the first wish of her companions, they paused at every place of notoriety, to give her an opportunity of viewing it; a week also was spent in Edinburgh for the same purpose; Roslin Castle was taken in their way from thence; and they at length finished the journey at the house of Lady Jane, which, in compliment to her son-in-law, she had called Rouverie. The mansion was situated within a small park, well stocked with deer; it stood on a gentle eminence, and was shrouded with wood of a luxuriant growth; while a smooth stream of crystal flowed on one side of it, with a pleasing and harmonious murmur, occasionally increased by a small natural cascade, which fell into it, and, after rain, afforded a delightful and refreshing spectacle. The house itself was elegant and comfortable; it was handsomely furnished; every thing around it seemed calculated for ease, not superfluity; while every thing within appeared directed by taste, without ostentation.

Constance endeavoured, by cheerfulness and activity, by exerting herself, to amuse Lady Jane, and attending her in her rural occupations, to banish, as much as possible, all those corroding images which her past life had painfully impressed upon her memory; she endeavoured to submit, without repining, to the unfathomable dispensations of Providence: but there were moments when the form of Maningham presented itself to her view, in all its native elegance and interest; when the gentleness of his manners, the purity of his attachment, the goodness of his heart, all irresistibly spoke to the tenderness of

her's. All the vivid scenes of peace and hope, of love and joy, all the sweet visions of domestic felicity, which fancy had pictured on her youthful and ardent mind, would then arise to torment her, and she would sigh over their wreck in agony unutterable: to her far-distant Eleanor would she then write all the feelings of her full heart, and then consign these memorials of her feeble resolution to her portfolio, uncertain whether she should ever again have an opportunity of addressing her, and trembling at the idea of adding one thorn to a bosom already wounded by the sharp point of calamity.

The circle of Lady Jane was entirely confined within the limits of her own territories; she mixed little with the surrounding gentry, accident and habit having long inured her to solitude.

The pastor of the adjacent village and his two lovely daughters, the medical man who attended the family, and one or two gentlemen who resided in the vicinity, were all who had as yet approached the mansion; yet, neither Lady Jane, Constance, nor Sir Charles, had experienced any want of company; each sedulous to amuse, and each calculated to afford occupation and give interest to conversation, the time passed in an uniform and uninterrupted course of rational and improving discourse—in reading, walking, and music—and in exercising the benevolent propensities of the heart, in relieving the distresses of the indigent and afflicted.

But a few weeks had scarcely passed, ere Constance perceived that the interest of every

occupation to Sir Charles depended entirely upon her presence ; he was always at her side, always politely assiduous to amuse her, and his air had in it that degree of tenderness and diffidence, which inseparably belongs to a real attachment ; yet not one expression fell from his lips which declared the state of his heart ; and delicacy forbade her appearing to suspect the interest which she felt she had attained over it : yet to foster this partiality by an apparent encouragement of it, when she knew that it was impossible she could ever return it, filled her bosom with the severest anguish, and gave a certain timidity to her conduct, which induced Sir Charles to believe that he was not quite indifferent to her ; while Lady Jane, marking the behaviour of both, congratulated herself upon the prospect of happiness which thus appeared to open to the son of her affections ; and, by frequently joining them together in the endearing appellation of my children, seemed to imply, obliquely, all the expectations she had formed.

The assiduities of Sir Charles increased, and the consequent misery of Constance increased with them ; she would have given worlds to have come to an explanation with him ; but as he never made any professions towards her, this was impossible. Lady Jane, however, was not so passive ; and perceiving, as she thought, an unaccountable diffidence in Sir Charles, she determined to come to the point with her *protégée* ; and, as a previous step, sought an opportunity of conversing with her son-in-law, when she,

without farther preface, demanded his opinion of her companion.

Sir Charles put down the book he had been perusing, looked in the face of his mother-in-law, and then said—"I scarcely ever saw a woman so really calculated to attract admiration and esteem."

Lady Jane rose from her seat—she took his hand—"All my business in life," said she, "would be accomplished, could I see you once happily married. If your wishes and sentiments accord with mine, you will lose no time in false delicacy. I cannot believe that you are born to sigh in vain. Will you suffer me to break the ice for you?"

"There is a degree of sensitive apprehension in the conduct of Miss Mountstewart, which I acknowledge pains and surprises me," said Sir Charles, "and leads me to doubt that I am not secure of obtaining that interest in her affections, without which I could not be happy with her; yet, from every observation which I have been able to make upon her conduct and character, I will candidly avow, that to obtain her heart, is become the first wish of my own."

"Have you not already proved, my son," answered Lady Jane, while a starting tear fell from her eye, "the uncertainty of human life and human happiness? then, for your own sake, I conjure you, waste not the precious moments, which may never return. This young woman seems formed to feel and partake that sweet intercourse of the soul, which gives life to the most uninteresting incidents; with a heart free

and disengaged, she cannot have beheld you with indifference."

"But are we sure that her heart is disengaged?" asked Sir Charles; "I have observed a certain pensiveness in her countenance, which has awakened doubts of a most painful nature in my mind—doubts which I have often resolved to satisfy; yet the moment she appears, my resolution vanishes, and I am contented to be silent, lest I should lose every hope, by a declaration on her part of a pre-engagement."

"I will not believe it possible that any woman can behold you with indifference," said Lady Jane; "and, most of all, I will not believe that Miss Mountstewart does so. You will allow me to be the best judge of my own sex: but here she is, and I am determined to know your fate."

Sir Charles rose hastily, and quitted the room. Constance met him at the door; he bowed, took her hand, and irresolutely led her into the parlour.

"Miss Mountstewart," said Lady Jane, "I have the most important communication to make to you—will you favour me with half an hour's attention?"

Constance looked at Sir Charles; his confusion was too apparent to be concealed; she endeavoured to speak, but apprehensive of what was to follow, could not find words. Sir Charles again bowed, and left the ladies together.

"I think you half anticipate my business," said Lady Jane, with a smile. "My son has

found it impossible to resist your attractions, and he has commissioned me to make you an offer of his hand. May I flatter myself that you are not insensible to his merit?"

The blushing Constance lifted her eyes to the countenance of Lady Jane—"It is impossible," answered she, "to be insensible to merit so superior as that of Sir Charles Rouverie; all that esteem, all that a sisterly affection can afford him, I must ever gratefully feel towards him; but, alas! I have nothing more to bestow. A painful coincidence of circumstances has obliged me to resign all ideas of marriage; but my heart is still tenderly attached to him who first awakened its emotions, nor can it ever make a second choice."

The emotion of Lady Jane was extreme; she looked at Constance for some moments in silence, and then asked her if she might be permitted to share her confidence?

The trembling Constance then entered into a recapitulation of her engagement to Maningham, and the circumstances which had broken it off, and waited in anxious expectation of Lady Jane's sentiments.

"As circumstances are now situated," said Lady Jane, "it is impossible you can ever think of uniting yourself to Mr. Maningham; it is unlikely also, that these circumstances can ever be explained to your satisfaction. Pardon me, then, Miss Mounstewart, if I cannot resign my hopes that you will yet look with an eye of partiality upon Sir Charles. You are unconnected, you are formed to bestow happiness. Sir



Charles loves you. Where can you then turn to a fairer prospect? Only reconcile yourself to the belief that Maningham is really your brother, and you will at once form new ties. You cannot hope to live for yourself alone—you cannot, I am sure you cannot destroy the happiness of another without regret—nor can Mr. Maningham hold you to an engagement which he dares not fulfil; he is too noble, too generous, even to wish it. Receive the attentions of Sir Charles; suffer him to hope, and, I doubt not, time will reconcile you to the change, which every sentiment of propriety dictates.”

Constance was about to speak; but Lady Jane, interrupting her, continued—“I ask you not to engage yourself to my son—I only ask you not to refuse him, to receive his attentions—I only ask you not to blast all the expectations of my old age, not to destroy the happiness of my chief stay; and surely you cannot refuse me.”

Constance leaned her head on her hand, and sobbed audibly; and after a short pause, Lady Jane went on—“You will suffer me to point out to you all the danger of your present situation—it is the province of age and experience to foresee dangers and difficulties, which often escape the observation of the young and the unwary—you may indulge the affections of the heart, till they become the very bane of your existence—you may nourish a fatal prepossession, till reason and virtue in vain essay to conquer it: the longer you cherish the attachment you feel towards Mr. Maningham, the greater will be your difficulty in eradicating it; and should your surmises obtain confirmation at last, how truly wretched

would you then be!—your life would be a scene of trial, and your health must sink in the conflict. The more ardently you now hope for the elucidation of the mystery attached to the birth of Maningham, the more deep and wounding would be your disappointment, should that elucidation turn out unfavourably. Oh, then! I entreat you to consider, and save yourself. The first step is by far the most difficult—resolve to be victorious, and you will conquer.”

“How can I form a resolution at variance with every feeling of my heart? how can I resolve to tear from my bosom the cherished image of one whose attachment to me has been so generous, so noble—to whom I owe so many obligations, who so well deserves my affection? Oh, Lady Jane! it is impossible.”

“Nothing can be impossible,” said Lady Jane, with energy, “to a mind so well regulated as your’s—nor are you required to banish an affection from your heart for an object truly meritorious; only restrain it, my young friend, within proper bounds. Let not my sincerity wound or offend you; but this attachment, begun in innocence, must, from this moment, become criminal; there is no middle course to be taken; to hesitate, is to err—for one moment may realize your worst fears, and convince you, at once, that every law of reason and religion is at variance with your wishes.”

Constance felt the truth of every word spoken by Lady Jane, at the very bottom of her heart—her tears flowed freely—she lifted her eyes expressively to the face of her friend—“I

will not err against conviction," said she, with timidity; "but you must not expect too much—I will strive to tear out the hopes I have so long cherished, but I dare not give encouragement to Sir Charles."

"And why not?" asked Lady Jane, with earnestness; "put Mr. Maningham out of the question, have you ever seen another being you would prefer to him?"

"I do not think I have," replied Constance; "but I am too doubtful of my own resolution, to give hopes which I may never be able to fulfil. The merit of Sir Charles is too conspicuous, to be a secondary object in the affections of any one; and, unless I could give him my whole heart, I am determined never to unite to him. I had reasoned myself into a belief, Lady Jane, that I could find happiness in the performance of my various duties, without forming any connexion with the world, save those already bestowed upon me by nature; nor can I, even now, see any cause to doubt that belief. With those active duties, my love for Maningham would not have interfered; the proud consciousness of deserving his esteem, of retaining it, would have softened to me the evils of life. and I would have resigned myself to the dispensations of Providence without a murmur. I have resigned myself to them, I have given up Maningham; but as to forming new ties, it is impossible I can now think of it. Yet I make no resolution against marriage—my inexperience forbids me, as I know not how years and circumstances may

change my sentiments and feelings; but, thinking as I now think, I can admit of no lover."

"Will you suffer me to repeat this conversation to Sir Charles?"

"Assuredly—sincerity is the first of virtues—I wish not to conceal my situation from him, but your Ladyship must see the necessity of hiding from the world the circumstances I have related to you."

Lady Jane coincided in this opinion, and the conversation dropped.

## CHAP. XIV.

" Alas! that Love, so gentle in his view,  
Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof."

BUT the hopes of Lady Jane and Sir Charles dropped not with it; they saw that time alone was wanting to insure the success of the latter, and resolved on persevering in the conduct hitherto pursued. Lady Jane went a step farther—she wrote to Maningham, and required from him a total renunciation of Constance, and requested he would endeavour to influence her in favour of Sir Charles. The answer to this letter I shall reserve to a future opportunity.

The attentions of Sir Charles, which were pursued without remission, yet without any open declaration, afflicted and pained Constance: a thousand times she wished she could devise any reason for returning to her native solitude at Landrenden, without wounding the heart of Lady Jane and her son-in-law; yet this was impossible—both seemed wrapped up in her society, both were sedulous to amuse and divert her, and neither spoke of the secret wishes which ever

seemed to be uppermost in the thoughts of both. The declining health of Lady Jane, too, demanded from her gratitude a sacrifice of every selfish feeling—she seemed to depend upon her for all those little kindnesses and solitudes which females are alone competent to bestow upon the infirmities of sickness and old age ; her arm supported her in her short walks, her voice soothed the momentary restlessness of pain ; and the eye of animated satisfaction with which Lady Jane regarded her, the earnestness with which she congratulated herself on the daughter fate had bestowed upon her, the energy with which she would intreat her to close her eyes, and not to leave her in her last moments, was not to be resisted.

Several weeks wore away ; Lady Jane appeared gradually sinking under the effects of the disease she laboured with, but her patience and resignation did not fail her. Long inured to suffering, her mind had attained a degree of fortitude rarely equalled ; and she supported herself with those serene hopes which the recollection of a life well spent never fails to produce.

Constantly associated together in her sick room, feeling the same anxiety for her ease and comfort, and each lightening the care of the other, Constance and Sir Charles became every day more familiarized to one another—a secret sympathy seemed to approximate them gradually to a friendship, which the sufferings of Lady Jane served to cement more closely ; and while the expressions which fell from the lips of Sir

Charles daily became more tender, Constance, from the peculiarity of her situation, noticed not the alteration, and gradually softened her own conduct towards him. A satisfaction the most serene, a hope the most delightful, filled the bosom of Sir Charles. To be, as it were, the sole companion of Constance—to be the partner of her solitudes, the repository of her confidence—to be always in her presence—to watch her intelligent countenance—to listen to her melodious voice—to see her gracefully bending over the sick-bed of age and infirmity, what happiness could equal it? but it was equalled, it was surpassed, by the cherished hope, which every day clung nearer to his soul, of calling the object of his adoration his own—of appropriating to himself all that loveliness and beauty which he could not gaze at without emotion.

The gradual approach of death was softened to the patient sufferer by a freedom from pain—exhausted nature seemed to slumber on in a torpid state, yet the mental faculties were as yet unimpaired; but the rapid change which a few days effected, left the medical attendants of Lady Jane hopeless of her restoration, and they frankly declared their opinion that she could not live many days. She herself seemed aware of her danger; and, exerting all her strength, she endeavoured to console the affliction of her two young friends—"My only regret at leaving the world," cried she, tenderly taking a hand of each, "is that I leave you before the consummation of an union which I had flattered myself with beholding. Oh! Miss Mountstewart, will you

not give peace to my last moments? will you not suffer me to give this hand to my son, and seal his felicity?"

Sir Charles flung himself on his knees before the agitated Constance, but he spoke not; while she covered her face with a handkerchief, and burst into tears.

Sir Charles took the two hands, which were folded in each other; he pressed them to his lips by turns; he looked at Lady Jane, then at Constance—a silence of many minutes ensued.

"Oh! Sir Charles," cried Constance, at length breaking silence, "have pity on me—be generous—urge not a suit to me at this moment, which, terribly awful, leaves me scarcely a power of resisting. Lady Jane, dear Lady Jane, ask me not to dispose of myself in a moment like this, when I am incompetent to think or reflect—Oh! be satisfied, that if I had the power of obliging you, I would not fail to exert it."

"Constance, Miss Mountstewart, dear, dearest Constance," said Sir Charles, "in almost any thing, I would, I will obey you. If the purest love, the most perfect esteem—if the most ardent affection, can make you happy, these you shall ever find with me: it shall be the study of my life to render you blessed; then do not consign me to despair."

Constance sobbed aloud.

Sir Charles paused a moment; and then continued—"I will not distress you—I require no promise—I will wait your own time."

"Miss Mountstewart," said Lady Jane, in a tone of solemnity, rising from her recumbent



posture, and stretching out her arms with a graceful earnestness, "to you I commit the happiness of my son. I speak prophetically—I speak as from the mansions of the dead, for thither I am hastening—he is formed to render you happy—you only can make him so. Oh! suffer me to die in the belief that you will mutually console and support each other; let me now unite your hands, if not in solemn affiancement, in a bond of indissoluble friendship, never to be broken till the termination of existence. My son, my dear son, how I feel, at this moment, the kindness you have ever shewn me! Miss Mountstewart, I thank you, from the centre of my heart, for all your goodness. We shall all meet again, I trust, in happiness."

More she would have spoken, but quite exhausted, she leaned back upon her pillow, and gasped convulsively.

Sir Charles, still on his knees, pressed the trembling hand of Constance to his lips; and Constance, in the same moment, returned the pressure—it was a sweet, a silent assurance of esteem; she instantly withdrew her hand, and flew to a table for a revivifying cordial; she put it to the lips of the invalid, and it appeared to reanimate her—she opened her eyes—she tried to speak, but her voice failed—she stretched out her arm, and again seemed to utter an incoherent ejaculation, and, after a few moments, sunk into a torpor, which continued many hours.

Constance and Sir Charles knelt together by the bed side; neither dared speak, yet the tears of both flowed freely. The face of Lady Jane

was concealed from their view by the bed cloaths; yet the convulsive flutter of her whole frame spoke the last efforts of expiring nature, and in about a quarter of an hour every struggle had subsided.

Sir Charles gently withdrew the cloaths—the face was serene and composed, Death had claimed his victim; and, in awful silence, Sir Charles led Constance from the apartment.

## CHAP. XV.

What is life? oh, ask the sage,  
What is life from youth to age?  
Telling up a painful steep,  
Gathering waters on a heap;  
Seeking hope's delusive ray,  
Seeking but to lose our way;  
Disappointment all below--  
This is life, the sages know,

MARTHA HOMELY'S POEMS.

CONSTANCE retired to her own room, where she passed many hours in serious reflections on the vanity of all worldly possessions, and wept over the memory of that being so recently recalled to her native mansions; she implored the support and protection of her Almighty Father, in the journey of her future life, and besought him so to guide and strengthen her, that on the bed of death she might be able, like her departed friend, to look forward with confidence and hope. A serenity in sorrow, a meek acquiescence in the divine dispensations, was the consequence of her pious reflections; and feeling that Sir Charles had, in his present anguish, a claim upon her attentions, she determined to overcome self, and use every effort to console him; she met him, therefore, as usual, at the dinner-table;

and though neither could force down a morsel of the good things which were set before them, yet each strove to converse upon indifferent subjects, and to draw the attention of the other from the melancholy scene so lately witnessed. When the servants had withdrawn, Sir Charles drew a chair to the side of Constance, and, seating himself in it, addressed her as follows—"This house and these scenes will now become quite insupportable to you, Miss Mountstewart; the memory of Lady Jane will embitter every object, and perhaps you already anticipate the moment of bidding me farewell."

"Believe me, you are mistaken," said Constance, with emotion; "the memory of Lady Jane, far from embittering, will ever attach me to scenes she once loved and cherished; yet, in the present state of things, you must, Sir Charles, see the necessity of my quitting, and that almost immediately, a house where there is no longer a mistress to sanction my residence. I speak to you," continued she, with earnestness, "as to a friend—to one in whom I can securely confide—to one whose knowledge of the world will afford me the advantage of experience, and who would offer me the same counsel and advice which I could expect, had nature given me a brother."

"My interest in your happiness, in all that concerns you, you cannot doubt," said Sir Charles with energy. "Oh that I could but flatter myself, that I could but hope you would be equally interested for me! I see all you would insinuate; I feel the propriety which dictates

your wish to remove from hence ; I only beg you to defer that removal for a few days, only till I can in person attend you to your own mansion ; in the mean time, I will request Mr. Rabey, the village pastor, to spare one of his lovely daughters to be your companion."

"But why should I put you to the inconvenience of taking so long a journey ?" asked the timid Constance.

"The inconvenience is nothing," said Sir Charles ; "the first pleasure of my life consists in your society ; then surely you will not narrow the compass of my enjoyments. I will form no presumptuous wishes from this indulgence—I will not even urge my own happiness—I will not even address you upon a subject ever nearest to my heart, if you command it, till I have placed you under the sanction of your own roof ; yet I must tell you how severely I shall feel this restriction—I must tell you, that, after that period, I will persecute you with my importunities—nor will I ever relinquish my hopes, till you either consent to become mine, or I behold you indissolubly united to another."

"You have already encroached upon the terms marked out by yourself," said Constance, with affected gaiety ; "and I believe, in my own defence, I must run away from you."

"You will recollect," answered Sir Charles, with a half smile, "that those commands have not yet been issued."

Constance was about to speak ; but he put his hand on her lips, and exclaimed—"Hear me

this once only, this once, and then issue your cruel mandates. It is impossible I can tell you how much, how tenderly I love you; but if I dare promise myself any hopes of your favour, I will prove the extent of my attachment by a life devoted to you. I know that you have a heart which cannot be insensible to the felicity of another; I know that the wishes of my deceased friend will influence you in my favour, and I will not believe that you can be indifferent to a passion so fervent as mine."

"That I can be indifferent to your happiness, is impossible," said Constance, with a confused and hesitating embarrassment; "but I can by no means be convinced that an union with me would insure it—you know all the circumstances of my past life, at least all which concern myself, my disappointment, my uncertainty; and dare you venture on an alliance with one who is yet scarcely freed from a prior attachment? If I know my own heart, I am incapable of doing any thing deliberately base or ungenerous; I would not prefer my own opinion, my own selfish gratification, to your wishes, did I think it possible you could be happy with me; but where would be the kindness, the generosity, of bringing to your bosom a broken spirit and an estranged mind?"

"But I will, I must believe," said Sir Charles, "that no such estrangement could take place. Do I not see you now cheerful and contented? have I not generally seen you so? would not domestic duties and family cares interest and amuse

you? and would not my ardent affection, my constant assiduity, my unremitting tenderness, waken in your gentle bosom a return of fondness? new and delightful ties might cement and strengthen an union thus happily formed."

"I must not hear you, indeed I must not," cried Constance, rising, and endeavouring to disengage her hand.

"Oh! but you must, you shall," answered Sir Charles, enjoying her confusion, and auguring from it a favourable event to his suit; "this once you must. Are not our pursuits and our tempers calculated to render such an union happy? do not you love a selected society of rational friends? do not you prefer a sober domesticated residence? and can you believe that I shall ever be half so comfortable as when my eyes rest on her who renders my home a terrestrial paradise—when I see her multiplied around me in miniature—when I see her, like a celestial being, continually occupied in goodness, shedding a glory around my habitation, and intent upon promoting the happiness of others?"

"A very pastoral picture," said Constance, making another effort to withdraw her hand from him.

"Oh! do not trifle with what is to me a business of so much importance; permit me to hope, that time may influence you in my favour; do not deny me the bliss of seeing, of conversing with you, of visiting you in your native residence, and I will bless you."

"As a friend, Sir Charles Rouverie will al-

ways joyfully be received at Landrenden," said Constance, rising.

Sir Charles respectfully kissed her hand, and fearing to urge her any further, suffered her to quit him.



## CHAP. XVI.

Shew me, a mistress passing fair ;  
What doth her beauty serve, but as a note,  
Where I may read who pass'd that passing fair ?  
Farewell. Thou canst not teach me to forget.

SHAKSPEARE.

MISS RABEY, in conformance to the request of Sir Charles, came over to Rouverie ; and from the moment of her arrival till that of the intended departure of Constance, Sir Charles persevered in his resolution of no more mentioning his passion to Constance ; he endeavoured also to prevail on Miss Rabey to attend her in her journey home ; but the indisposition of Mr. Rabey prevented his success ; and having consigned the remains of Lady Jane to the tomb, he made preparations for his departure.

In respect to the memory of her deceased friend, Constance had put herself into deep mourning ; and as to travel alone with Sir Charles during so long a journey militated against her ideas of propriety, she hired a young woman to accompany her, in the capacity of a servant.

On the night preceding her intended removal, Sir Charles put into her hands a sealed packet, which had been left by his mother-in-law, as a small token of regard to her young friend ; and Constance retired to her own room, to open it :

it contained several valuable ornaments for the person, and two letters, and these she eagerly set about perusing--the first was an address from Lady Jane, conjuring her to complete the happiness of Sir Charles; and using many arguments to convince her, that by so doing she could alone act properly, and insure her own felicity; it was apparently dictated by affection, and expressed in such moving language, that the tears of Constance flowed freely as she read it; and her resolution of refusing Sir Charles began to waver: but the second, which, at the first glance, she perceived to be written by Maningham, entirely overcame her fortitude; a trembling seized her whole frame, perception was extinguished, and she in vain attempted to make herself mistress of the contents. She covered her face with both hands, she walked about the room in breathless anxiety; life or death seemed to be at the issue--again she grasped the letter, and, more dead than alive, read as follows:

“ You ask me, dear Lady Jane, if I entertain any hopes of clearing the mystery which hangs over my unfortunate birth—you ask me if I have hopes of again being able to offer myself to the acceptance of Miss Mountstewart? How shall I answer these queries satisfactorily to myself and to you? Alas! I have none—I dare not form any—I must not form any, for my conviction of our relation to each other has been strengthened by a wonderful coincidence of circumstances, which I have never had resolution to reveal to her; I have therefore resigned myself

to my unfortunate destiny—I have endeavoured to reduce my rebel heart to the wishes and hopes of a brother—hard indeed has been the effort, but I am now calm. You ask me, also, dear Lady Jane, if having resigned my own hopes, I will use my influence with Miss Mountstewart in favour of Sir Charles? I demand of you, in return, whether you would not regret to owe his happiness to the interference of another? Sir Charles is no common character. Suffer the gentle Constance to overcome a first prepossession (so I may, without vanity, be allowed to call it), and I firmly believe, from my knowledge of Miss Mountstewart, that he will want no auxiliary—leave his success to time and his own assiduities—and, oh! believe, that to see Constance happy, even in the arms of another, is the first wish of my heart. Pardon me, therefore, if I refrain from writing, as you would wish, to Miss Mountstewart—I cannot write to her—I will not, I dare not see her; but, however she may eventually determine to dispose of herself, I will, I must believe, that her felicity will be the peculiar care of Providence: nor shall I think any affliction I can sustain of importance, so I am convinced that she is rewarded. I can offer no good wishes to Sir Charles—the very opportunity of preferring his suit to Miss Mountstewart, of anticipating its success, is in itself felicity. May the eternal Providence multiply his joys, and confirm his hopes!

So prays the unfortunate,

MANINGHAM."

Constance folded this letter to her heart ; she sighed—she wept over it : it afforded her another proof of the generosity of Maningham, while it destroyed at once every hope which lingered in her bosom.

The night passed in restlessness and impatience ; she could not close her eyes—all the painful incidents of her past life flitted before her imagination—all the gentleness, the kindness, the consideration of Maningham, passed in review before her ; she felt an indescribable wish to know those circumstances to which he alluded in his letter ; but she resolved to suffer in silence, and rather to be for ever ignorant of them, than to wound him by an inquiry, which, by renewing their intercourse with each other, might revive in his bosom those painful recollections, which had in part subsided. “ The struggle is at length over,” sighed she, mentally ; “ every hope is annihilated ; he even wishes me to unite myself to another ; it is then become criminal to waver ; he wishes me happy. Oh, my God ! do I not daily pray for his felicity ; Can I, ought I to bestow my hand upon Sir Charles, when I am yet painfully interested in the fate of Maningham ? when I feel assured, that, did no bar disunite us, I would, I could live only for him ? Oh that Eleanor, my Eleanor, was present ! that I had one friend to advise me—one relative to whom I could apply for consolation and protection ! alone in the world, to whom can I turn for support ?”

She rose from her bed—she dressed herself for her intended journey—she endeavoured to

wash off the traces of her tears and recent agitation from her face, but the paleness of death overspread every expressive feature; and the moment she presented herself at the breakfast table, Miss Rabey and Sir Charles remarked her appearance, and the latter proposed postponing their journey for a day or two. Constance, however, was resolute in admitting of no delay; and, after taking an affectionate leave of Miss Rabey, she entered her carriage, and, accompanied by Sir Charles and her woman, set out on her journey.

By an effort of politeness, she, in some degree, conquered her own feelings, and entered into conversation with Sir Charles, who sedulously exerted himself to amuse and entertain her, by pointing out the beauties of the scenery through which they passed, and entering into a description of the local customs and manners of the inhabitants, until, at length, he drew her, by degrees, from self, and the recollection of past suffering.

They reached Edinburgh early in the afternoon; and, as much time had been wasted at Rouverie previous to their setting out, and Sir Charles had some business to transact with his lawyer in that city, he requested Constance to rest there till the following day, to which, as she was really indisposed, she readily consented.

Sir Charles left her at the inn, to seek his solicitor; and immediately on his departure, she retired to a bed-chamber, where she lay down, to renovate her exhausted faculties, and where a sweet and refreshing slumber soon sunk her into

forgetfulness, and where she continued to repose till her domestic awoke her with the information of his return ; she hastily changed her dress, and prepared to meet him at the dinner-table.

" You have never, I think, Miss Mountstewart, been at the Theatre," said Sir Charles, as the cloth was removing ; " will you take a peep at it to-night ? we can return before the entertainment, that we may not too much encroach on the rest necessary to enable you to bear up against the fatigue of to-morrow."

" I should like it of all things," said Constance, with hesitation ; " but can I go without a chaperon ?"

Sir Charles smiled—" I have foreseen that objection," replied he ; " but as you are entirely a stranger, and your woman appears decently dressed, suppose, for once, you cast aside the mistress, and take her with you—it will be better than going alone with a young man ; and any amusement must be preferable to a dull evening at an inn. Besides," continued he, with an arch look, " to tell you a truth, I am momentarily in danger of infringing on the treaty made between us ; and since I must not talk to you in my own way, I shall feel infinitely relieved in being obliged to think and talk a little of other people."

" Like your sex," answered Constance, with an air of gaiety, " you have always an answerable argument for any thing which falls in with your own inclinations."

" I wish you may prove my arguments unanswerable," said Sir Charles, " on the only subject which I will ever pretend to dispute with

you. Permit me to call your woman; and, as no time is to be lost, we will set out immediately."

Constance acquiesced; and Sir Charles ordering a chaise, they were soon set down at the Theatre.

The house was uncommonly crowded, it being the second night of the young Roscins's performance in that city, and the play was Douglas. With great difficulty, they procured seats.

"You have afforded me a double satisfaction," said Constance, with vivacity, "for I have long wished to see this redoubtable hero! Pray, did you know of his being here?"

"I would not tell you so," said Sir Charles, "lest, not being able to obtain places, I should have occasioned you a disappointment."

The curtain almost immediately drew up, and every eye turned towards the stage.

Constance was highly gratified at the powers exhibited by the youth; and if she did not think him quite the best performer she had ever beheld, yet she acknowledged, that, for his age, he was a wonder.

Sir Charles, delighted to see her in spirits, and to have been the means of affording her amusement, chatted, between the acts, with unusual spirit; and Constance, grateful for his solicitude to please her, replied with more than her common gaiety: but her mirth was suddenly interrupted, for turning her eyes accidentally round the Theatre, to observe the company, they rested on the countenance of a beautiful girl in the stage-box, the unadorned simplicity of whose at-

tire seemed to add to the natural graces so lavishly bestowed upon her. Constance turned to Sir Charles, and demanded who she was; but the question had scarcely escaped her lips, when the blood mounted impetuously to her cheeks, and she would have given worlds to have recalled it, for a gentleman, whom she had not before observed, at the same moment leaned forward, from a back seat, to address the object of her inquiry; and she immediately recognized him to be Maningham.

Sir Charles changed colour, his gaiety vanished; and he replied—"I really know not—I never saw the lady before;" and immediately sunk into silence.

In vain Constance attempted to direct her attention to the performers—the scene before her had lost every interest—in spite of all her efforts, her eyes continually wandered to the spot where Maningham was seated. A sentiment stronger than curiosity, a feeling like jealousy, took possession of her mind; she wished to quit the Theatre, but a dread of what Sir Charles might think prevented her making the proposal.

Sir Charles seemed to watch her countenance with restless anxiety, while a deep and gloomy melancholy took possession of his fine features.

Constance looked at her mourning habit, and the concordant dress of her companion—if Maningham saw them together, if he remarked their appearance, if he discovered that they were travelling without any associate but a domestic, what would he think, what could he suppose, but that she was already married, or engaged to be so?



She flattered herself that she no longer entertained any wish of uniting herself to Maningham; she was convinced, that to indulge such a hope was become criminal; but she wished still to retain his friendship, his good opinion—could she do this, when the apparent levity of her conduct, the facility with which she substituted one object of attachment for another, the ease with which she surmounted an affection so lately professed, and the object of which had been so generously disinterested; could she do this, when every concurring circumstance must prove to him the littleness, the weakness of her mind, and her incapacity of discriminating merit so superior as his? She wished herself a thousand miles distant—the idea of being seen by Maningham, was agony—she could scarcely have been more anxious to conceal herself from him, had she been conscious of the most criminal conduct.

The conclusion of the play at length induced Sir Charles to propose going home.

Constance rose with delight to quit the Theatre; unfortunately she beheld the party in which she had seen Maningham, rise also—a tremor agitated her whole frame. Sir Charles presented his hand to assist her; she hesitated—stopped in irresolution—and then, reflecting how capricious she must appear to him, accepted the offered civility: but her irresolution had produced the very incident she most wished to avoid, by giving the party of Maningham time to advance; and just as she reached the box-door, she beheld him beside her.

Sir Charles paused involuntarily—he gazed,

first on Constance, then upon Maningham—his observation increased the confusion of the former. "Let us go on, let us go on," cried she, with emotion; "dear Maningham, let us go on."

The sound of her voice, as she thus accidentally, and by mistake, pronounced his name, reached the ear of Maningham—it vibrated on every chord of his sick heart; he let go the hand of the young lady he had been conducting from the Theatre, and turned, with emotion, to the spot where Constance stood.

The young lady ran on to join the rest of her party.

Constance attempted to speak to him, but articulation failed.

"Sir Charles Rouverie! happy, happy man!" said Maningham, regarding the mourning dress of Constance. "Miss Mounstewart, Constance, is it—can it be possible? You need not my felicitations," continued he, addressing Sir Charles; "you are too, too eminently happy;" then seizing the hand of Constance, he imprinted on it a fervent kiss; and, beseeching Heaven to bless her, rushed out of the house.

Constance could not speak; she suffered Sir Charles to lead her from the spot, and, more dead than alive, entered the carriage, which waited for them at the door, Sir Charles and her woman following in silence.

## CHAP. XVII.

"Inspiring thought of rapture yet to be,  
The tears of love were hopeless but for thee!"

WHEN they arrived at the inn, Constance took a candle, and wishing Sir Charles good-night, she would have retired immediately to her apartment. But Sir Charles taking her hand, entreated her not to leave him.

"I am really too ill to converse," said she, timidly, resigning the candle to her woman, who extended her hand to receive it from her, "and I cannot eat."

"Only a few minutes," said Sir Charles, mournfully, "will I trespass on your time; suffer Jane to get her supper, and give me the pleasure of your society during that interval."

Constance seated herself in silence; and Jane, taking the hint of Sir Charles, retired; but a considerable time elapsed ere Sir Charles could profit by her absence. He walked about the room in agitation, paused several times, as if intending to speak, and again paced the apartment: at

length, however, he summoned resolution to say, "I cannot bear to see you unhappy; Oh, Constance! your emotion, your distress unmans me. I dread to offend you, but I can be silent no longer. It is impossible to speak my feelings. Is your attachment to Maningham so really fixed, so decidedly established, that it cannot be shaken? can nothing restore your serenity?"

Constance, in increased agitation, attempted a reply. "Mistake not my feelings," cried she. "I am indeed, heart-wounded, but love makes no part in my emotion. It is a dread, an unconquerable dread, that I have innocently forfeited that esteem, which, to preserve, is necessary to my existence. I could behold Maningham the husband of another, I could rejoice in his felicity, but I cannot bear that he should think me weak or capricious. And what must he, what can he think of me this night?"

"And what do I not feel," said Sir Charles, mournfully, "to see you thus! Can I, dare I hope! Oh, Constance! deceive not yourself. Your feelings, your agitation, speak death to every fond hope I had dared to cherish. I know, I am conscious, that I am unworthy of you; but I believed that you must in time have become sensible of an attachment so ardent, so tender as mine. I believed that your gentleness, your sensibility, would be awakened in my favour; and that my happiness was not unworthy of your consideration."

Constance rose from her seat. "To believe that I can ever be insensible of your merit, or indifferent to your happiness," answered she,

"would be doing me great injustice ; but I cannot believe that an union with me could ever render you happy. My spirit is broken by disappointment, my temper rendered irritable by a thousand circumstances entirely unknown to you ; and a restless anxiety continually hangs about my mind, which I can participate with no human being. With a temper and feeling so situated, how can I think of forming an alliance with any one ; with a consciousness of concealing circumstances, which I have not liberty to reveal ? Dare I meet any man at the altar, to form so holy a connection as marriage, when I dare not perform its first great law, that of sincerity and confidence ? when I am still painfully interested in the happiness of him to whom my first faith was plighted ? I have resigned Maningham. I will endeavour to love him only as a brother ; but there are circumstances, which forbid my making a second choice."

"You cannot, you must not form so cruel, so fatal a resolution," said Sir Charles, with energy. "I can respect your secret sorrows, I can rely upon your propriety of conduct, without endeavouring to fathom those secret circumstances, which you think yourself bound to conceal. For, I must believe that those circumstances refer not to Maningham."

"They certainly do not," said Constance, "in the slightest degree. He is himself ignorant of them. But you will excuse me, Sir Charles, if I persist in my resolution of giving no hopes, which I am not secure of being able to realize. Choose another, a worthier object. You can

scarcely offer yourself to a woman whose heart is at liberty, without succeeding."

Sir Charles threw himself at her feet, and exclaimed, "I will patiently wait till the moment when the heart of Miss Mountstewart is at liberty, and then she has herself assured me of success."

"You are determined to misinterpret my words," said Constance.

"How can I fail to make that interpretation to your words," asked Sir Charles, "which can alone give hope to my existence? I will patiently wait your own time. I will follow you with my assiduities. I will be solicitous only to render you happy. Oh that I had, indeed, the power of making you so! Heaven is my witness, that, did no bar intervene to separate you from the object of your first choice, I would conquer my own feelings, and be the blessed instrument of uniting you to him! Constance, dear Constance! if I cannot do this, can you blame me, if I endeavour to appropriate that felicity to myself, which he is debarred from obtaining?"

"I must positively leave you," said Constance. "You have forgotten all that you promised me. I again wish you good night." She rang the bell, and ordered her woman to attend.

"You must not quit me without scaling my pardon," answered he. "It is scarcely possible to be silent, when the heart is so ready to prompt. I will, however, offend no more. Only tell me that you are not angry at my presumption, and I will bid good angels guard you!"

"I believe, that to my own weakness," said Constance, "I must in part attribute all that has passed. And as I hope to be free from such folly in future, I will hope also that you will have no excuse for a repetition of the offence. May I flatter myself you intend setting out early in the morning?"

"As early as you please; five o'clock, if it will not fatigue you."

Constance expressed herself satisfied, and, followed by her maid, retired to her own room. To sleep was impossible. The occurrences of the past evening recurred immediately to her memory, and effectually prevented repose. The image of Maningham still flitted before her imagination. She still heard the soft tones of his voice; his ardent prayers for her happiness, even while he believed her the wife of another. She reproached herself for having permitted the attendance of Sir Charles; and became immediately convinced, that, in the eye of the world, that permission would be considered as a tacit acceptance of his addresses. The openness with which he had avowed his attachment to her, and his determination of persevering in it, became a new source of disquiet, and added to the difficulty of her situation. For, while the respectfulness of his manners increased towards her, and his every action tended to promote her comfort; while he dwelt upon every word which fell from her lips, and watched her very looks, to anticipate her wishes; while he appeared to live upon her smiles, and tremble at every change in her countenance, she yet saw that he encouraged the

idea, that she must eventually become his; and that time alone was wanting to efface the memory of a first prepossession. She felt angry with him for being amiable: for being blessed with all those personal and external advantages, which would give him merit in the eye of the world, and render her rejection of him imprudent. She could form no reasonable objection to the alliance, but what resulted from the pre-engagement of her affections. And knowing the impropriety of her attachment to Maningham, and the impossibility of her ever uniting herself to him, the reasonableness of this objection vanished at once. She endeavoured to persuade herself, that the mysterious circumstances attached to the history of Eleanor, and the secrecy she had engaged to preserve respecting it, was a sufficient reason to influence her against marriage; as it militated against her principles to have any concealment from her husband. But her better reason in a moment condemned the sophistry of this argument; as she was well assured that Eleanor meant not to confine her to a conduct so entirely improper: and that even at the present moment, the necessity of secrecy might no longer exist. Her return to her own mansion, accompanied by Sir Charles, his continuance in the vicinity, his occasional visits at her house, would certainly subject her to the comments of the busy and the curious. And she knew not any human being who would sanction her conduct, by becoming an inmate of her habitation; no one to whom she dared make the proposal, whose consequence in the world was sufficient to establish the pro-



priety of her life and character. The proximity of Mrs. Linzee's residence, for she had heard from Jonathan that she entirely lived in the country with her paramour, might also subject her to inconvenience. For she knew enough of that lady to be assured, that she would be one of the first to welcome her return to the home of her ancestors, and that she was not easily to be repulsed in any attempt she had fixed her heart upon accomplishing. And knowing every former circumstance, from her introduction to Lady Jane Mackey, she felt that it was not improbable a dispute between Lord John Martindale and Sir Charles might be the consequence of these attempts. These thoughts harrassed and oppressed her during the night. She felt that she stood in need of a friend, an adviser, a protector. And, though her judgment pointed out to her that a legal protector, in the person of Sir Charles, was the only probable way of reconciling and smoothing all these difficulties, yet her heart revolted from the measure, and her thoughts again turned towards Maningham, as the only being she could ever picture to herself as the object of attachment. Yet the early misfortunes and disappointments of Sir Charles, the gentleness of his manners, the sweetness of his temper, which she had ample opportunities of remarking, and the benevolence of his heart, were not without their influence upon her mind. She felt anxiously solicitous for his happiness. And could she have persuaded herself, that her acceptance of him would have promoted his felicity; could she have persuaded herself, that she could conscien-

tiously engage herself to him, she would have felt no difficulty in discarding every selfish consideration, and immediately acceding to his wishes. Sleep at length interrupted these reflections, and she rose the following day, without having formed any plan for her future conduct, yet anxiously anticipating the recommencement of her journey.

## CHAP. XVIII.

"He was a man above man's height,  
Even towering to divinity,  
Brave, generous, pious, great, and liberal."

Nothing material occurred during the first part of the journey, excepting the severity of the weather, and the consequent apprehensions of a fall of snow, which would considerably have retarded the motions of our travellers, if not have entirely impeded their progress. They, however, reached Carlisle in safety. Sir Charles strictly, during this period, restraining every expression of attachment, which might have wounded the sensitive delicacy of his companion, confined his conversation to indifferent subjects, and behaved in every respect with the kindness of a tender and affectionate brother. This mode of conduct, in a great measure, contributed to reconcile Constance to his attendance. But the never failing mistake, which occurred almost at every place where they rested, of her being considered the wife of Sir Charles, and being addressed by the title of your Ladyship (for, Sir Charles was well known on the road),

never failed to produce the most painful and unpleasant sensations, which not even the impossibility of her having undertaken the journey alone, ignorant as she was of the world, and unused to such enterprizes, could entirely overcome.

It was morning when the travellers quitted Carlisle. The intense coldness of the weather, the encreasing darkness of the heavens, a biting easterly wind, and a gloomy heaviness in the atmosphere, portended too surely a coming storm. Sir Charles proposed putting four horses to the carriage, and sent forward an express, to order relays for several stages, determining to profit by the present interval, and get as far on as possible in the journey. Some refreshment also was taken into the chaise, that they might suffer no delay upon the road. But all these precautions were ineffectual. The storm commenced at the end of the first stage, and before they reached Kendal, the surrounding country appeared perfectly white. As the snow was not, however, as yet deep enough to prevent their progress, they pursued their journey without intermission; reached Burton in safety; and from thence set forward towards Lancaster. But the delay occasioned by the heaviness of the roads, and the clogging of the snow, had considerably retarded their motions. And ere they got half the way, they found the evening imperceptibly closing in. The road was now become almost impassable. The snow continued to fall. The wind drifted it across the hedges in a thousand different directions; almost blinding the postilions and their horses, and rendering the way ex-

travelling dangerous. Sir Charles put down the window and made an effort to encourage the drivers; promising them a magnificent reward for their exertions. No reward, however was necessary. For the men, sensible that their own safety depended upon exertion, whipped, swore, and exclaimed without intermission, consigning themselves, their horses, and the snow, to the devil without mercy, and all without effect. For the road was now really blocked up, without affording them an opportunity of proceeding. The horses plunged in vain. The carriage was stuck fast, and no effort could remove it.

"Py St. Tafil!" exclaimed the elder of the postillions, who was a Welchman, "we must stay in the road all night!"

Sir Charles leaped from the chaise, and found, to his inexpressible concern, that the snow was nearly three feet deep. "How many miles are we now from Lancaster?" asked he.

"To the pest of hur pelief," answered the Welchman, "two or three miles. Put it is impossible to say, for hur eyes are all bewildered, and hur can see, and consider, and understand nothing. Now, if it was not for the women, it would be petter to walk forward."

"To remain here, exposed all night to the severity of the weather, is impossible," answered Sir Charles. "Our own lives, and that even of the horses, might be the sacrifice. We must consider of some mode of extrication. What is to be done? Do you think the horses can walk with security to carry the two ladies, if led by us?"

"We can put try," replied the man, "and the other two horses must be led by Peter. And do you hear, you Mr. Peter, take you good care of the animals; for, by all the power of our ancestors, who are now, God bless 'em! tust in the church of St. Winifrid, and our pedigree to boot, there will be nothing but perturbations, and wranglings, and displeasures, if any harm happens to the horses. So, God bless you! take care of the beasts."

Constance listened in trembling anxiety to this conversation, and the arrangement which succeeded; and while the horses were removing from the chaise, offered up a mental ejaculation to her Almighty Father for protection and support: then quietly suffered Sir Charles to seat her on one of the animals, which the Cambro-Briton assured her repeatedly was as mild as a piece of new cheese, and would carry her in safety to the world's end. But, in spite of these assurances, she was completely terrified; for she knew too well that the good qualities of her horse were, in the present circumstances of danger, a very insufficient security. As no alternative, however, offered, she affected a degree of courage she was far from feeling, and assisted in persuading her woman to take the only accommodation which now offered itself to her acceptance. Mrs. Jane was, at length, reduced to compliance, by a fear of being left by herself in the carriage. All, therefore, began to set forward in due form and order. The postillion, Peter, with the pair of horses, led the way, in hopes that he would in part clear a road for those

who next followed. Constance, whose safety was insured by Sir Charles himself, whom no entreaties on her part could persuade from leading the animal on which she was mounted, next followed. Mrs. Jane, attended by Morgan ap Griffith, brought up the rear. Sir Charles endeavoured to lighten the fears of the whole party, by laughing at the awkwardness of their probable appearance, for it was now become so extremely dark, that they could not have seen each other, had not the glare, effected by the snow, given a false light to surrounding objects, which contributed to bewilder rather than assist them. In spite of difficulties, they advanced; and, in the course of two hours, reached a spot, which Griffith declared he well knew to be only half a mile from Lancaster.

In increased spirits, the travellers now moved forwards. They had passed several cottages on the road side, but as they were now so near the goal of their destination, and these could promise them no other accommodation than a bare resting-place for the night, and a shelter from the winds of Heaven, they made no effort to stop or awake the inhabitants. All were now intent on making every exertion to get into Lancaster as soon as possible, and in this effort pushed forward the horses. But, alas! these hopes were of short continuance. For the horse on which Constance was seated soon after making a false step, she was, in spite of the attempts of Sir Charles, precipitated from her seat, and thrown to a considerable distance. Sir Charles,

fearful of the animal's plunging on her, without power to move, endeavoured to rein him in. But in vain; his efforts only drew the creature into more imminent danger, and forced him to partake it: for the road suddenly shelving off into a deep ditch, thither both himself and the horse were precipitated. The screams of Jane; the "Cot pless hur, and save hur, and save hur!" of Mr. Griffith; the sudden pause of Peter, who exclaimed, "the Lord have mercy upon us!" the groans of Sir Charles; and the kicking, snorting, and plunging of the horse, which had accompanied him in his descent, altogether formed a concert extremely horrible. The terrified, but unhurt, Constance endeavoured to extricate herself from the snow, and join her companions. Jane threw herself from the horse on which she was seated, protesting she would trust to her ten toes for ever, rather than run the hazard of her life, by mounting him again; and Morgan ap Griffith, resigning him also to Peter, sought how he might rescue Sir Charles.

Constance, just at this moment, reached him. She called loudly on Sir Charles, but deep and audible groans alone answered her voice. Half distracted, she clasped her hands in agony, exclaiming, "Good God! if he should die, how, how can I ever forgive myself!"

"Sir Charles, Sir Charles!" screamed the frightened Jane, "speak to us, if you are a living sinner! Speak, are you dead or alive? Only tell us that."

"Cot's blessing on the oman's tongue!"



cried Griffith. "Hold your potheration, and your discourses, and your perturbations, and your noise, and your prabbles, and your prawls, the gentleman is not tead; for, I tell you, hur heard his voice, and, py Cod's blessing, matters might have been still worse. Patience is a plaster to cure all sores; and Morgan ap Griffith knows every inch of the gully, and hur will co down presently, and make matters and things tight again." Then crawling on his hands and knees, and groping to preserve himself from a similar accident to that which had befallen Sir Charles, he descended at length into the ditch. His first effort was now to secure the horse; and, having forced him up the bank, and delivered him to the charge of Peter, he next proceeded to find Sir Charles. This was no very difficult matter; for the moon, which had been some time rising, assisted his exertions, and the marks made by the fall in the before unbroken snow, completed the discovery.

Sir Charles was, however, totally insensible, and in vain Morgan ap Griffith conjured him to speak to him. On his attempting to move him, pain restored his exhausted faculties, and he asked where he was? Constance drew a bottle of aromatic vinegar from her pocket, and Griffith, taking it from her, applied it to the nose of Sir Charles; and in a few minutes he recovered his senses. "I am bruised all over," said he, in a faint voice; "and I believe my arm is broken. But, tell me, is Miss Mountstewart safe?"

"I am safe and well," cried Constance, with

vivacity. "And, I thank God, I have not your life, your precious life; to answer for."

"You must try to stand on your legs," said Griffith, "and then if we can, by God's blessing, get you on horseback, all may be well."

With much effort, Sir Charles, at length, rose, and the kind-hearted Griffith by degrees helped him out of the ditch: but a new difficulty arose. He could not walk, and Griffith was unable to lift him on the horse.

Constance stood by the side of Sir Charles. She took her veil from her head, and made a bandage with it for his broken arm; and, borrowing a handkerchief from Jane, formed it into a sling, to support the invalid limb. But though this contributed much to the ease of Sir Charles, no one had as yet thought of an expedient to assist in mounting him.

Peter, at length, however, exclaimed, "Why, bid Buxom lie down, and then the gentleman can get upon her!"

"God's blessing upon the thought!" cried the Welchman. "Put then, your honour, look, you won't be never able to bear the plunge she will make in getting up, for, let her tell you, it will be a hard pull."

"Cannot his Honour then mount from off the back of Buxom upon Ball?" asked the boy. "Why, Buxom will stand as still as a stone, and and never get up, when she is bid to lie down."

This, therefore, as the only alternative, was obliged to be attempted. And while Peter stood at the head of Ball, and Mr. Griffith and Jane assisted Sir Charles to mount, Constance,

to whom fear had bestowed unusual courage, carefully held Buxom, till the arduous effort was accomplished: and step by step they proceeded towards Lancaster, which place they reached about three o'clock in the morning.

## CHAP. XIX.

"Our escape is much beyond our loss."

MORGAN ap Griffith immediately led the way to the inn where he was accustomed to put up. As might have been expected, every person in it was in bed. Repeated knocking and calling at length brought some one to the window. "Let some person come town, and let us in immediately," cried Morgan. "Here's two laties and a gentleman, who have peen out all night, and here's pains, and penalties, and proken pones, and somepody must get up, and make candles and jullips, and pring clean clothes, and make goot fires. And here must pe toctors, and surgeons, and physicians, Cot bless us, and save us!"

"Lord, Mr. Griffith! what could tempt you to come out on so unseasonable a night, and such bitter cold weather? I don't think there's a spare bed in the house. However, I'll come down and let you in." And then, having closed the window, the shivering party had to wait in

the street, till the young lady, who was one of the chambermaids, had dressed herself to her satisfaction, which was not speedily accomplished, as, having long cast an eye of affection on the multiform charms of Mr. Morgan ap Griffith, she was loath to appear before him *en dishabille*.

The violent pain which his arm gave him, prevented Sir Charles from experiencing that severity of cold, which almost benumbed his companions. It was with the greatest difficulty he could restrain expressing his sufferings; but delicacy to the feelings of Constance induced him to stifle every sensation, which could agitate or distress her: while the sensibility which she avowed for his situation, the soft tone in which she addressed him, and her expressions of regret for his disaster, sunk deep into his heart, and bound the link which attached him to her, still closer than ever.

The door was at length opened, and the fair chambermaid led the way to a cold and comfortless parlour, which, however, she endeavoured to render more tolerable, by applying a candle to the fuel in the grate, previously placed ready for that purpose. Morgan ap Griffith offered himself to go for a surgeon, and the girl having given him directions where to apply, placed a sofa near the fire for Sir Charles, and then proposed getting a change of attire for the females. Sir Charles objected to this proposal, insisting that they should immediately retire to bed; but the chambermaid overruled this objection, by affirming, that there was not a bed unoccupied in the house: and, yielding to necessity, they were

obliged to content themselves with dry clothes, which they retired to another apartment to put on.

The surgeon in the mean time arrived. He examined the arm of Sir Charles ; but the swelling was too great to enable him to ascertain with precision the extent of the injury which had been sustained. Applying a dressing for the reduction of it, he ordered him to retire to bed, immediately after the copious bleeding which he prepared to effect, to prevent the disagreeable consequences of his other bruises ; commanding him at the same time to abstain from animal food, and all fermented liquors.

On her return to the parlour, Constance heard the event of his visit from the chambermaid (whom I shall henceforth call Mary), and, nodding significantly to her, she stepped out of the room, the girl, who understood the hint, following her. "The life of the gentleman may depend upon the circumstance of his being kept quiet and easy," said she, slipping an infallible argument, in the form of a guinea, into her hand ; "get him a comfortable bed, and you will for ever oblige me."

The girl put her hand to her head, and appeared to be considering ; and then taking a candle, she hastily quitted the room. In less than a quarter of an hour, she returned with the information, that she had procured and prepared a bed, which Constance went instantly to inspect. Finding every thing clean and comfortable, she prevailed on Sir Charles to suffer Morgan ap Griffith to convey him there ; and, having pre-

eured a cup of tea, sent Jane with it to his apartment. After having partaken of the same nourishment, Mary, at her request (for the guinea had rendered Mary extremely obliging), brought two blankets into the parlour. One was spread on the floor for Jane, the other on the sofa for her mistress; and, charging Mary to keep a constant watch on the sick gentleman, and to see that he wanted nothing, she locked the parlour door, each being rolled in a blanket, sunk into a sound sleep, for which the fatigues of the past day and night had so well prepared them.

Mary, in the mean time, retired to the kitchen, to comfort and refresh the benevolent Morgan; and, though she found his company more than usually pleasing, because there was no one to interrupt their tender protestations and glances, she nevertheless forgot not the commands of Constance, frequently taking a turn into the apartment of Sir Charles, and placing on a small table, by his bed side, balm tea, lemonade, or something calculated to be of service to him.

On the following day, Constance was really ill; but her own feelings did not prevent her from being extremely anxious about Sir Charles. The surgeon was very assiduous in his attentions; and from him she learned the swelling was so much abated, that he hoped, in the course of the day, to be able to set the disjointed arm, which did not appear to have received a compound fracture. This information relieved her from a weight of anxiety; and the departure of some of the guests, who had taken private lodgings, permitting her to have the accommodation of a

two-bedded room for herself and her maid, she determined to retire to it, and nurse the violent cold she had taken. Previously to effecting this determination, she found it necessary to pay a visit of ceremony, to thank an elderly lady, who had actually got from her bed, on the night before, to resign it to Sir Charles.

The lady, whose name was Wilson, received her very graciously, expressing herself highly gratified, in having had an opportunity of being serviceable, and her wishes for the restoration of Sir Charles; adding at the same time, "If I did not fear to be intrusive, I would take the liberty of visiting the invalid in his apartment."

Constance looked delighted. She wished herself to see him, but there was an indelicacy in the idea of going to his apartment alone, or only accompanied by her woman, which had hitherto totally prevented the attempt. Now, however, under the sanction of a respectable female, whose age and sedate manners gave her consequence and dignity, there could be no longer any impropriety in the action. And she replied with vivacity, "How good you are! I will send my woman immediately, and ask admittance."

Jane almost instantly returned with the information, that the surgeon was with the invalid, and that Sir Charles must therefore defer the pleasure of seeing them till the evening. Constance, having expressed her hope, that an acquaintance so happily begun might be continued during the time they remained together at the inn, bade the lady farewell and departed; having previously made an agreement with her, to



meet at the hour of dinner, take that repast in the society of each other, and, after, adjourn to visit the invalid.

The mild and benevolent manners of Mrs. Wilson (so was the strange lady called) won insensibly the good graces of Constance; while that genuine trait of goodness of heart, which had induced her to resign her own bed to the necessities of an entire stranger, completed the prepossession in her favour. Our young traveller retired to take that repose her exhausted faculties so much needed, with a pleasing presentiment of the inestimable value of the companion she had thus acquired; while Mrs. Wilson, scarcely less gratified by the adventure, looked forward to the enjoyment of rational society, during the period she was forced by the snow to spend at Lancaster.

As to Constance her anxiety about the weather was at an end. She rather rejoiced at the continuance of the snow, as it afforded her a pretext for remaining on the same spot with Sir Charles, without subjecting her to the necessity of appearing merely to wait for his recovery, which, however, she resolved to do, in defiance of every obstacle or animadversion. The journey had been undertaken by him, upon her account. The accident had happened in consequence of his exertions to save her. Common gratitude then demanded that she should defer her journey till his health was perfectly established; that she should watch over him in the hour of sickness, and attend him in his convalescence. And when does the generous heart feel

satisfied under an obligation which there remains a possibility of rewarding? She half determined to reward the attentions of Sir Charles, by the inestimable gift of herself. I say half, for there yet lingered in her bosom a fond remembrance of Maningham, which frustrated the best efforts of her gratitude.

Morgan ap Griffith had been indefatigable in his services; and the luggage, which had been left in the chaise, and the chaise itself, were conveyed in safety to the inn: and those services were liberally rewarded by Constance, who assured him that she should always remember him with gratitude.

Mrs. Jane was delighted at the receipt of her clothes, which she had given over for lost. And she was also happily relieved from her attendance in the sick room, by a nurse, whom the considerate surgeon had sent to attend on his patient. On awaking from her sleep, which had afforded her very salutary benefit, Constance found every thing going on in a train to afford satisfaction to all parties. The dislocated limb had been set during this period, and Sir Charles had borne the operation better than could have been expected. The duties of the toilet being finished, our heroine joined Mrs. Wilson at the dinner-table. An animated conversation succeeded; and both rose to visit Sir Charles, with increased prepossessions in favour of each other.

Sir Charles, though confined to his bed, had not been indifferent to his appearance. Though his face was pale and sallow, and his features frequently distorted, from the pain which his arm

gave him, yet the vivacity of his conversation was undiminished, and a something, more expressive than a smile, darted from his eye, as he answered the affectionate enquiries of Constance, whose tone of voice expressed a deep interest in his recovery.

"It is impossible I can feel pain," said he, "when blessed with so many good wishes. Do you not think me, Madam, happy in suffering this slight evil," continued he, addressing Mrs. Wilson, "when by it I have probably saved Miss Mountstewart from a similar injury?"

Mrs. Wilson rose from her seat. "Is that young lady's name Mountstewart?" asked she, with emotion. "I thought; I believed; I was told she was your sister."

"I am not happy enough to have so near a relative," replied Sir Charles. "And if Miss Mountstewart is the only being who can be selected to fill up that vacuum, I confess I have no wish to attain one."

There was an air of archness in this speech, and in the manner in which it was spoken, which covered Constance with confusion.

Mrs. Wilson scrutinized her countenance, and then looked at Sir Charles. There was a severity in her air, which shocked and surprised Constance. She endeavoured to recover her composure and speak, but it was impossible.

"You are returning from Scotland, I think?" said Mrs. Wilson.

"Not from Gretna Green," said Sir Charles, with vivacity. "Vulcan has been forging no

chains for us. Love's fetters should be silk, not iron."

Again Mrs. Wilson looked at Constance, and again the mantling blush covered her features.

Sir Charles, in pity to her confusion, exclaimed, "Don't you think I am in excellent spirits, Miss Mountstewart, for a sick man?"

"Too great, I fear," replied she; rising at the same moment, she looked at Mrs. Wilson and continued, "we had better, I think, retire, and as we have seen our patient so well, wish him good-night."

Sir Charles held out his hand to her. Constance gave him her's. "Shall I see you to-morrow?" asked Sir Charles, with an expressive look, "or is the weather changed?"

"It is not my intention to leave this place," answered she, "till the snow is quite dissolved, and the weather settled; and I cannot think of being in the same house with my preserver, without seeing him daily."

Sir Charles kissed her hand. Hoping they should find him better the next day, the ladies again adjourned to the dining-room.

## CHAP. XX.

" You do impeach your modesty too much,  
To leave the city, and commit yourself  
Into the hands of one who loves you thus."

A **CONSIDERABLE** silence followed. Mrs. Wilson fixed her eyes on the countenance of Constance, with the most scrutinizing earnestness. To avoid this scrutiny, Constance took up a newspaper, which had been just brought in, and, turning to the fashionable intelligence of the day, read the following article. " We understand, the sudden demise of the Earl of Fairwater, and the illness of Lord Carneby, his eldest son, will make a considerable change in the cabinet. It is even reported, that Lord Frederic Montague has been recalled from the Cape of Good Hope, to fill an eminent station in the home department; and that an officer of considerable consequence is about to be sent to that place, several of the military at the Cape being to accompany his Lordship to England."

Constance sat ruminating upon these particulars, so much engaged with what she had read, that she forgot Mrs. Wilson, till the latter, having summoned resolution, addressed her as follows. " You will pardon, Miss Mounstewart, the liberty I am about to take, but the interest I feel in your welfare must plead my excuse. It

is so extraordinary a circumstance, to see two young people, of different sexes, without any family relation subsisting between them, travelling together, that I cannot help expressing my surprise at it."

"It has ever been my unfortunate destiny," answered Constance, with emotion, "to war against the opinions of the world, and to do so unintentionally. With the very best motives, and an ardent desire of doing right, I continually err; and, being thrown upon the grand theatre of life, without an adviser, without experience, at the age of twenty, is it to be wondered at?" Mrs. Wilson was moved, and Constance continued. "Had I been blessed with a mother, had my youth been formed under the auspices of a female, I should doubtless have been a different creature. I should have been instructed by her, in the propriety of my future conduct in life, I should have profited by her example, I should not, at once, have been thrown on my own weak reason and discretion for support. I should have been prepared for the contest." Mrs. Wilson rose from her seat, and walked to the unoccupied window. She covered her face with her handkerchief, to conceal her feelings. She spoke inarticulately, and Constance went on. "I undertook this journey with the most painful sensations of its impropriety. I hired a domestic to supply the place of a companion; and only engaged in it, as a less offence against delicacy, than continuing in the house of a bachelor, who sought to win my affections."

"Is Sir Charles," asked Mrs. Wilson, with

a convulsive earnestness, "honourably attached to you?"

Constance eyed her with resentment. "Is there any thing in my conduct, Madam, which can lead you to suppose I could listen to any overture of a contrary nature?"

Mrs. Wilson paused. "I mean not to offend you," said she, earnestly, and in a tone of tender entreaty. "The interest I take in your welfare is no common one. Your inexperience in the world might mislead you."

"I am neither deceived nor misled," said Constance, with dignity. "Sir Charles is the most honourable, the most disinterested of men. He has ever conducted himself towards me with the kindness, the consideration, the affection of a brother. And that I am not his wife, is my own fault."

"If it is a fault," replied Mrs. Wilson, "the remedy is still in your own power. Sir Charles appears formed to secure affection, to command esteem. If you ever intend to unite yourself to him, surely it would be prudent to do so on the first moment of his recovery. Then his attendance, his protection, would be an honour to you. In the present circumstances, you must see, you must feel, that it will be to your disadvantage."

Constance leaned her arm on the window, and supported her head upon her hand for some moments without speaking. And then, starting from the spot, she exclaimed, "If you feel that interest in my happiness which you profess, oh, stay here, till I am able to quit this place! It

would be worse than inhuman, it would be barbarous; to leave Sir Charles now. I would rather sacrifice my existence than to do so. Yet with a companion of my own sex, I can defy the world. Who can say that it is improper to follow the impulses of humanity? I must be a wretch indeed, if I did not feel for Sir Charles; worse than a wretch, could I, from any selfish consideration, leave him to his fate!"

"Will you permit me to ask, how you came to be so peculiarly circumstanced?"

"By the death of Lady Jane Mackey, Sir Charles's mother-in-law. I was left a visitor in her house, at the time of her decease. I assisted Sir Charles in supporting her during her last illness. I was recommended to his protection by a most invaluable friend. Could I then return all the way from Scotland to my own mansion alone, and without a protector?"

"But, if Sir Charles really wished to become your legal protector, why did you delay his happiness?"

"It is impossible I can enter into particulars, which involve many painful circumstances. All the history of my past life hangs upon that one question. I am not engaged to him. I have bound myself by no tie. Whether I ever shall do so, it is out of my power now to decide. If I had been blessed with a parent, all that I have suffered, all that I now suffer, might have been spared me. But who shall question the dispensations of Providence?"

"Who, indeed!" groaned Mrs. Wilson, "when daily experience teaches us the un-



searchableness of his ways. I will, however, no longer trespass on your forbearance. I must have appeared strangely impertinent and curious. I will endeavour to make amends for my error ; and, as I am a citizen of the world, assure you, that you may command my stay, as long as it is necessary to your comfort. I was engaged now in a journey of health. For, notwithstanding I look so robust, my physician thinks me in a decline, and I am bound to the Bristol Hot Wells."

" I hope he is mistaken," said Constance, with vivacity ; " nor can I suffer you to forego a journey on my account, which is, perhaps, indispensably necessary."

" While the weather is so severe, invalids rarely travel," said Mrs. Wilson, with a smile. " But I have not yet heard the extent of your journey."

" Pembrokeshire," answered Constance.

" If economy makes no part in your arrangement," replied Mrs. Wilson, " why not accompany me to Bristol ? There, some of your own domestics can meet you. And, if four of us travel together, the attendance of Sir Charles will be unnoticed."

Constance joyfully acceded to this proposal, and the conversation then took a different turn.

## CHAP. XXI.

Oh woman, in our hours of ease,  
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,  
And variable as the shade,  
By the light quivering aspen made,  
When pain and anguish wring the brow,  
A ministering angel thou.

SCOTT.

SIR CHARLES gradually recovered from the effects of his bruises, and his arm was in a fair way of doing well. He was permitted to leave his apartment, and was received by Constance, with an expression of familiarity and kindness, which assured him he had lost nothing by the accident. The snow was by this time dissolved, and the surgeon who attended him, permitted him to hope, that, in two or three days, he might recommence his journey. The presence of Mrs. Wilson, far from being unacceptable to him, afforded him the greatest satisfaction. He felt himself freed by it, from the restraint he had so long laboured under, and again openly sought to win Constance to his suit; while she, accustomed to hear him upon this subject, gradually became familiarized to its repetition, and insensibly lessened her repugnance to it.

The return of some unfavourable symptoms in the complaint of Mrs. Wilson, at length urged them to depart. Constance, who daily became more pleased with her society, and more

anxious to afford her assistance and attention, resolved upon accompanying her to Clifton, and remaining with her, till she either found benefit from the waters and change of air; or till they were no longer expected to prove beneficial: when she hoped to prevail on her to make Landrenden her permanent residence. The advantage she should derive from such a companion, she felt would be incalculable; for the mind of Mrs. Wilson appeared stored with information and intelligence. Her manners had all the polish of high life, without its frivolity; and a certain pensiveness of countenance spoke too plainly, that she had not passed through the world without her portion of its sorrows. The resignation with which she spoke of her complaints, the placidity with which she endured them, added a new interest to the matronly dignity of her character. Constance felt, that, to soften to her the hours of pain, to administer to her infirmities, to watch over her declining health, to resign herself to the sweet hope of meliorating the evils incident to suffering humanity, would afford her, in her last moments, the purest satisfaction. Sir Charles, equally charmed with Mrs. Wilson, seemed to partake in these benevolent wishes. In the sweetest harmony, the whole party journeyed towards Clifton.

As nothing material occurred during this journey, I shall not particularize it. Suffice it to say, that they reached that place in safety; and lodgings were immediately procured for the whole party. Sir Charles, with his accustomed delicacy, selected a separate habitation for him-

self, yet so near the residence of the ladies, that a few minutes might at any time bring him to them.

Two months elapsed without any very material circumstance occurring, except the receipt of Eleanor's letter from the Cape; which increased the serenity of Constance, by taking from her one cause of anxiety, and enabling her to look forward to the happy moment of their reunion, and to anticipate that pure and permanent felicity, which was likely henceforth to crown the days of her beloved sister.

The health of Mrs. Wilson did not mend. She appeared daily sinking, by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, to "that bourne from which no traveller returns." Though no immediate change was apprehended, yet the medical gentleman who attended her, declared her recovery impossible.

Constance, as she attended the patient sufferer, would often wonder, that a being so formed to grace society, and to cement the ties of family intercourse, should be so totally left to herself; yet, far from entertaining upon this account any suspicions to the prejudice of her friend, it, on the contrary, only formed an additional motive to increase her exertions and kindness towards her. Sir Charles, respecting the dignified propriety of every sentiment uttered by the invalid, respecting her also for the attachment Constance felt towards her, and for the interest which she seemed to take in his happiness, had no wish ungratified. He felt that he was approximating, by slow, but sure degrees, to the object on

which he had fixed his heart. He lived in the society of her he so fondly, so tenderly loved. He saw, that her esteem for him daily encreased. He was admitted to her confidence, and his expressions of regard were received without displeasure. His arm was entirely restored, but his health was far from good. And this seemed another link to bind him to the kind and compassionate heart of Constance.

The approach of Spring made her now wish to visit Landrenden; and finding that change of air was likely to benefit, rather than to hurt Mrs. Wilson, she proposed to her to undertake the journey.

Sir Charles heard the proposal with dismay. He rose from his seat. He took the hand of Constance, and looked at her with a tender and reproachful expression of countenance.

Mrs. Wilson quitted the room.

"Oh, Miss Mountstewart!" said Sir Charles, "what am I to think? what am I to hope? You talk of quitting Clifton; you talk of returning to your own mansion, a mansion propriety forbids my visiting, unless you permit me to hope that I may one day become its master. Dear Constance! let my affection, my respect, my unchangeable attachment, plead to you in my favour. The similarity of our pursuits, our sentiments, will ensure your felicity, if you will but consent to become mine. Is it possible you can feel no interest in the happiness of one who lives but on your smiles!"

Constance would have spoken, but her voice failed. She trembled convulsively. Ardently

interested in the welfare of Sir Charles, she wished to conform to his wishes; but a secret repugnance still lurked at her heart.

"What is it you fear?" said Sir Charles, earnestly. "Do you doubt my affection, my honour? Do you doubt my wish to render you happy? Oh no, you cannot, you must not."

"I doubt only myself," replied Constance, timidly. "The sincerity, the generosity of your conduct, demand a warmer return than I am capable of making you. I feel, painfully feel, my own deficiencies. I tremble to form an engagement, which you may hereafter repent having made."

"Has any part of my conduct given you cause to suspect such a change? Am I not devoted to you? Is not your slightest wish a law to me? And do you think I can ever fail in my respect, my attachment towards you? Oh, be not so unjust to your own merit, or my discernment!"

"I cannot be unjust to your discernment," said Constance, with an affected gaiety; "but partiality blinds the eyes and the understanding. I have lost that vivacity of character, which once gave the colour of the rose to every object; and why should I entail on you a cheerless and dull uniformity? I am bound to dwell at Landrenden. I must draw you from every scene, endeared to your memory. And can I possibly suppose, that I have the power to prevent your regretting them?"

"Good God! Constance, how you talk! When I hear and see you, can I regret any

place or object? Surely you know me too well to believe it! Oh no! what is place, or home, when unendeared by social affection; when the sweet sympathies of life, all that can give a charm to existence, are wanting? What is country, when all the relative connexions are broken? Your country, Constance, shall be my country. Your people my people."

"Oh pray finish the sentence," said Constance, with a smile, "nor leave out that chief source of family concord, religion."

"I flatter myself, in a business of such moment," said Sir Charles, "we can never have but one opinion. I was brought up in habits of regularity, and early misfortune has confirmed me in them. But, why will you evade my importunities? I must know my fate at once. I must explain to you all my sentiments, all my hopes. Unless you forbid me most positively, I will follow you to Landrenden. You are alone formed to render me happy; and I cannot but think, that my own happiness is not, cannot be incompatible with yours. Have we ever yet differed in sentiment, on any object of consequence? Are not family connexions necessary to your felicity? Can you ever hope to form a permanent attachment, without strengthening that attachment by marriage? Where can you hope to find sincerity and friendship, unconnected and isolated as you now are?"

"I am not so unconnected and isolated as you, perhaps, think me. I have an affectionate sister living, whose return to England is daily expected. She has a husband and a child."

Sir Charles looked surprised. "Be not astonished," said Constance, "that you have never heard me mention these dear relatives before. A singular history is attached to the fate of my Eleanor. She is, however, now happy; happy, beyond her most sanguine expectations."

Sir Charles continued to importune. And, as Constance had not reason on her side in resisting these importunities, she, at length, consented to receive him as an acknowledged lover, and permit his attendance on her into the country.

Sir Charles was quite happy. Constance, convinced she had acted rightly, felt more at peace with herself than she had been for a long time. Yet, in spite of every effort, the recollection of Maningham would intrude upon her mind. She hoped that she might now never discover his origin, or that, having discovered it, it might be really so intimately connected with her own, as to encrease her satisfaction at having thus disposed of herself.



## CHAP. XXII.

Again her native mansion spread  
Its portals proudly o'er her head ;  
Again she sought the fragrant grove,  
And paced the scenes of former love.

MARTHA HONEY.

THE return of Constance to her own mansion afforded general satisfaction to all her domestics and dependants. Every one hastened to congratulate her upon the event. Sir Charles, in the affection with which he beheld her universally regarded, felt an increased security of future felicity.

The change produced in Mrs. Wilson, by the salutary air of Landrenden, was but momentary. After a few days, her complaints returned with full force, and the excessive heat of the weather weakened her so much, that she was no longer able to quit her apartment. Sir Charles, trembling to think the effect her death might have on Constance, now urgently importuned her to complete his felicity. Constance, above trifling with him, when she was herself decided, fixed an early day for their union.

As some preparations were necessary for this event, Sir Charles set out on the following day for London, purposing to return to Landrenden on that preceding the one appointed for the marriage.

He had not been gone many hours, ere, by a singular and unfortunate combination of circumstances, a person arrived at the Castle, with a letter for Mrs. Wilson. Constance was in the apartment of that lady when it was delivered to her.

Mrs. Wilson changed colour. The paper fell from her trembling hand. She turned with a deathlike countenance to her companion. "A stranger," cried she, with convulsive earnestness, "demands an interview with me. I am at a loss to conjecture who or what he is. But, indeed, I am unfit to receive him. I had flattered myself that I should now have been permitted to die in peace. Oh, Constance! it will not be; I fear I know not what; but I deserve, I deserve it all. My name, my very name, good God! what am I to think! Oh that I had cast myself on your benevolence, on your charity, that I had avoided every claim on my property! Support me, my child, support me!"

Constance threw herself on her knees before the poor sufferer. She clasped her hands. She conjured her to be calm. "You will kill yourself," cried she, "by this cruel agitation. No one shall intrude upon you. Oh, think only of yourself!"

"I am a poor undone creature!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilson, "I deserve not your kindness. Oh, Constance! are there not faults of such a horrible tendency, that they cannot, they ought not, to be forgiven? Yet let not a child dare to upbraid the author of her being! It is not for a mother to blush before her child. You look as

if you would not wound me! But your voice has often spoke daggers to my heart. If you have any feeling, any mercy, any compassion; in your nature, you will promise not to hate me."

"To hate you is not in my nature!" exclaimed the astonished and agonized Constance. "For Mercy's sake, recollect yourself!"

"If I must see this person, let me see him instantly. Suspense I cannot endure. Send word to the stranger that I will admit him."

The person who had brought the letter alone waited in the hall; and Constance, having delivered the message, returned to the invalid, whose terrors were inexpressible. Several times during the short interval which elapsed in the absence of the messenger, she was with difficulty preserved from fainting. When, at length, informed of his arrival, and the presence of her visitor, she found it impossible to receive him. Martha was therefore sent to conduct him into the parlour, and Constance again attempted to soothe the agitation of her friend. But all her efforts were unsuccessful.

"What!" exclaimed the pale and trembling spectre, "what is the bitterness of death to a moment like this? Oh, my God! support me." Then half rising from her chair, she felt herself obliged to sink into it again, being incapacitated from standing. "Bid him come up," cried she, "bid him come up, I will exert myself this once, and all will be over."

Constance rang the bell, and desired to see the stranger. In a few moments, the door opened, and Maningham stood before her. A

shriek escaped her. She held by the window for support.

Mrs. Wilson also uttered an exclamation, "Verney! Verney! good God! who are you?"

Constance hid her face in her handkerchief, and sobbed audibly.

Maningham looked at her a moment in silence. Then, turning to the invalid, he exclaimed, "Who, and what I am, you, Madam, can best inform me. I have been directed to you by Messrs. Londry and Longford, to satisfy my doubts upon this head. I was committed to the care of General Sir Archibald Campbell, by a gentleman of the name of Verney, Captain Frederic Maningham Verney. Am I his son?" Mrs. Wilson groaned audibly. Maningham continued, "Is there any secret connexion between my family and that of Miss Mountstewart, which forbids our being united to each other?"

Constance raised her eyes to the countenance of Mrs. Wilson, with a wildness which agonized Maningham. She put her hands to her ears, as if determined not to hear the answer to this query. But it struck upon her heart like ten thousand daggers. "Frederic Maningham Verney embarked for India with two children, the issue of his first marriage. If I may credit the evidence of my senses, and your astonishing likeness to him, you are one of them."

Constance turned to the invalid, she threw herself on her knees before her. She clasped both her hands. "Did you know my mother?"

asked she. "Did you know my father? Was my mother twice married? Had she, had she a son? I never knew a mother's tenderness. I never received a mother's blessing. Oh, speak to me of my mother! Bless me in her name!"

"Your mother was unworthy of you," groaned the invalid. "She forsook, she abandoned her only children. Oh! she was a wretch, a wretch indeed! She deserved not the blessing of good and dutiful children. She was an outcast from society, an adulteress!"

Constance rose from her knees. She paced the apartment with clasped hands, wildly exclaiming, "My mother! oh, my mother! it cannot be! Oh, my mother! My mother! did she, could she abandon her innocent children to disgrace and infamy! Oh, my mother, my mother!" And then, as if suddenly recollecting herself, she flew to the agitated sufferer, and wildly demanded if her mother yet lived.

Maningham took her hand. She looked in his face without speaking. "Constance, my dear Constance!" said he, "be calm!"

"Your Constance," repeated she, with a cold shiver, "your Constance! Once I thought so myself, but now you can give me no comfort. My mother, my unhappy mother, has sealed my destiny. But I will remember your kindness. I will tell it to Sir Charles, and he will not, cannot grudge you my gratitude. Did you not tell me to marry Sir Charles? I only ask you that?"

"Are you really married?" asked Maningham, with an expression of horror. "Am I too late? Are you already married?"

Mrs. Wilson with difficulty preserved herself from fainting.

"You are my brother," said Constance, with encresing wildness. "Do I not know that you are my brother? I thank God nothing can cancel the affinity. Sir Charles will be glad to see my brother. And I will tell him how good you are."

"You have no brother," cried Mrs. Wilson, convulsively. "You never had one. That young man is the son of your wretched mother's first husband? Look up, Constance, and believe me."

Constance groaned audibly. She fixed her eyes on the ground. She leaned her head on the back of the invalid's chair. "Of my mother, of my mother, you speak not. Oh, tell me, does she yet live, that I may fly to embrace her? Can a mother's heart be deaf to the affectionate solicitations of her child? Shall I not win her from the arms of vice? Shall I not speak peace to her perturbed conscience? Shall I not soothe her sorrows, and shelter her in my bosom, from the scorn of a pitiless world?"

Mrs. Wilson groaned convulsively. "Oh!" continued Constance, "if I have a mother, if she lives, if my mother lives, tell me of her! Can any offence live in the memory of a child? Can she forget the being who cherished her infancy? I ask but to know my mother, and you deny me."

The invalid sunk upon her knees. "Oh, Mountstewart!" cried she, "you are now avenged. I have learned to blush before the

pure image of virtue, to tremble in the presence of my own child. Degraded and debased," continued she, uplifting her hands, and speaking in a mournful voice, "Oh, Constance! behold your mother! She humbles herself before you. She asks you not to pity. She hopes not for your forgiveness. For, has she not blighted the sweet blossoms of your infant years?"

Constance threw herself on her knees beside her mother. She folded her arms round her. She supported her head upon her shoulder: and, while she bedewed her pale face with tears, kissed off the drops of agony which rolled down her cheek.

Maningham, in the mean time, gazed on them with folded arms, and a countenance of the deepest despondency. Several times he essayed to address Constance, but in vain, and he was musing on the propriety of quitting the house, when the voice of Constance roused him.

"Fly, Maningham! for God's sake, fly!" cried she. "My mother is insensible! send Martha to us!"

Maningham hurried from the apartment, and did as he was commanded. And then seizing his hat, he went in search of the family apothecary, whose residence he was well acquainted with: while Constance and the nurse exerted themselves to restore the unhappy insensible.

## CHAP. XXIII.

" Or should the spark of vestal fire  
In some unguarded hour expire,  
Or should the nightly thief invade,  
Hesperia's chaste and sacred shade,  
Of all the blooming spoil possess'd  
The dragon honour charm'd to rest ;  
Shall Virtue's flame no more return,  
No more with virgin splendour burn,  
No more the ravag'd garden blow,  
With Spring's succeeding blossoms ? No ;  
Pity may mourn, but not restore,  
And woman falls to rise no more."

IT is now time to relate to my readers the history of the unfortunate and guilty Mrs. Mountstewart.

In a remote but beautiful part of the county of Devon, lived Mr. Baskerville, who inherited from his ancestors a considerable fortune, and an ancient name. Early in youth, he had married, from motives of affection alone, the daughter of a farmer, who, far from rewarding, as she ought to have done, the generous tenderness which had raised her from obscurity, had, after the birth of her first child, eloped from his mansion, with an



officer quartered in that neighbourhood ; and, embarking with him soon after for the West-Indies, died of a fever incidental to the climate.

The temper of Mr. Baskerville, which had always been impetuous and ardent, rendered this disappointment insufferably grievous. He renounced the world; secluded himself in his own mansion; shut up his infant daughter from all intercourse with society, determining himself to superintend her education. But the passion of revenge, still lurking in his heart, filled it with prejudice and inveteracy. He believed all women alike weak, vain, and capricious. And he vowed an irreconcilable hatred to all who wore the dress of an officer; determining himself to form an alliance for his daughter, when she attained a proper age, without suffering her to have a voice in that which was to decide the future happiness or misery of her life.

To educate a girl, without female assistance, was nearly impossible. Mr. Baskerville sought for a governess, properly qualified to undertake that office. The widow of a clergyman at length offered herself to his acceptance, and he closed with her for a liberal stipend, which was to be paid annually. She was bound to engage with him for the full period of his daughter's minority, and never to absent herself from his mansion, unless her health required it: and her attention was to be rewarded on the day of his daughter's marriage, if that marriage accorded with his wishes, with a farther remuneration, which would make her easy for life.

Mrs. Hartop was well calculated to fill this situation. She was sensible, well informed, and of a mild and placid disposition. Mr. Baskerville was highly pleased with the acquisition thus made to his establishment.

Eleanor Baskerville grew up, eminently gifted with personal accomplishments, as no expence had been spared in her education, while her beauty and large fortune formed the theme of the surrounding neighbourhood. But, hitherto, she had been so vigilantly guarded, that she had never been seen, but accidentally, and that in the presence of her father, or Mrs. Hartop. And, as no visitors were ever received at her father's house, except people who came upon business, and then she was confined to the solitude of her own apartment, it is not to be wondered at that she was ignorant of the common usages and forms of society, and unacquainted with the manners of those with whom she was hereafter to mix.

But, notwithstanding the care which was taken of her, and the watchfulness of her two guardians, it was impossible they could prevent her hearing, through the medium of the domestics, of those pleasures, and that world, she was debarred from entering; or that her seclusion was out of the usual course of female education. It was impossible, that, with a mind ardent and impetuous, and an uncommon share of vivacity, she could fail to feel the irksomeness of the restraints imposed on her; or that she should not anxiously anticipate the moment, when she should be emancipated from them. But, when-

ever she expressed to her father the slightest wish to obtain any indulgence, she was unvariably repulsed with the most acrimonious reproaches; bid to run after folly and the men, like her abandoned mother; pick up a red-coat, and run to ruin her own way. "But, d'ye hear, Miss Baskerville!" he would continue, with increased vehemence, "my money is at my own disposal, and if you do any thing to displease me, you may starve, for any thing I care. I will have a son-in-law of my own choosing, or he shall get none of my cash."

Tears were the general reply made by Eleanor to these observations. And often, in the bitterness of anguish, would she unburden her full heart to Mrs. Hartop; often protest that she wished to lose an existence filled with mortification and unkindness.

"My father," cried she, "I verily believe, fondles his dogs more than his daughter: and really loves one better than the other. They are running about at liberty. I am cooped up continually in a prison. I suffer a worse than Egyptian bondage. I am not allowed even the liberty of thinking. I know it must end in something bad. My nature cannot endure it!"

In vain Mrs. Hartop exhorted her to patience. In vain she represented to her the duty she owed her father. The painful deprivations she had sustained hardened the heart of the pupil to all advice.

A violent fit of the gout, to which Mr. Baskerville was occasionally subject, increased the moroseness of his temper, and induced him to

draw more freely on the society of Mrs. Hartop for his comfort. Her vigilance, in regard to Eleanor, was in consequence suffered to relapse. And Eleanor, without intending to make an improper use of her liberty, frequently, when certain she was engaged with her father, stole out of the house, to enjoy the blessing of liberty, and to sigh over the little chance she was likely to have of such enjoyment in future. By degrees, as the confinement of her father continued, she extended these walks, and, accidentally, in one of them, encountered Captain Verney, who found means to enter into conversation with her. And with this meeting they were both so mutually pleased, that the Captain in future generally bent his steps towards the house and grounds of Mr. Baskerville, and Eleanor was constantly on the watch to meet a companion for her rambles.

Verney was at this time about eight-and-twenty. He had been married to a young girl, who had eloped with him to Scotland, and who had only survived the birth of her second child.— Without fortune, with a handsome person, and fashionable manners, he possessed just that lively, rattling, frolicsome temper, and carelessness of wealth, which is often found in young men of his profession; and though this temper had already involved him in serious difficulties, he made no attempt to reform it. Without troubling himself about futurity, he enjoyed the present moment, and every pleasure within his grasp.

The artless simplicity of Eleanor delighted him. Her beauty attracted his admiration. And

he soon saw that her heart was entirely his. He indulged himself in protestations of love, without once thinking of the consequences which were likely to result from them.

The character of Mr. Baskerville, and his hatred to the military profession, were often discussed by the neighbouring families, in the presence of Verney. He could promise himself no hopes of obtaining Eleanor as a wife from the hand of her father; and he was not libertine enough to plot the seduction of an innocent girl, who, entirely confiding in his honour, would hang upon his bosom, and vow eternal fidelity to his image. By degrees, however, he became more tenderly attached to Eleanor; for, what heart can withstand affection? And he began to cast about in his mind for an expedient to sanctify their mutual attachment by marriage.

Mrs. Hartop no longer occupied the same apartment with her ward. She had removed to one nearer to Mr. Baskerville; and simply contented herself with visiting her after she had retired to rest, taking away her candle, and wishing her good-night.

Thus, by degrees, the liberty of Eleanor was enlarged; and to her apartment Verney had been several times admitted, after the family had withdrawn to rest. The windows were low, and opened on a retired and secluded side of the park, very well shaded with trees. After having freely discussed the advantages of a secret marriage, it was agreed that Verney should take private lodgings, at a small town in the neighbourhood, which was distant twenty miles; that

the banns should be published in the church ; and, if this step remained undiscovered, Eleanor should escape from these windows, and, travelling all night, should unite her fate to that of her lover, and then return to her own home, and carefully conceal what had passed from the world. This she could easily do, by pretending on her arrival, that she had taken a longer walk than she was accustomed to, and affecting indisposition in consequence of it. A gentle reprimand from Mrs. Hartop was all she had to fear, as her father was still confined to his room.

Improbable as this scheme may appear, it succeeded, possibly because Verney had managed the business with such art, that no one suspected him of being acquainted with Miss Baskerville. Eleanor returned home, happy in having disposed of herself so much to her satisfaction, yet not without some apprehension of her father's malediction, when the affair should be discovered.

The air of romance attached to this marriage, the private admission of Verney into the apartment of Eleanor, was carried on some time without discovery, and kept alive their mutual passion. But, alas ! this was but of short duration. Some disagreeable circumstances occurred between Verney and his associates, and he quitted the regiment in disgust.

The situation of Eleanor became critical ; and the consequent fear of discovery, the poverty of her lover, and the anger of her father, stared her in the face. An unlucky fall completed her misfortunes. But as her situation had not yet

been suspected, Mrs. Hartop alone profited by the discovery ; and moving Eleanor to another room, she waited in that usually occupied by her ward ; having learnt from her the hour in which Verney usually visited her, to speak to him.

Finding the account of Eleanor really correct, and that they were legally married, she entered with a generous interest into their concerns. And as there was no possible hope of moving Mr. Baskerville, she recommended them to separate for a time, till chance or good fortune should befriend them.

To this, however, Verney objected ; till one attempt had been made to soften Mr. Baskerville. This one attempt Mrs. Hartop undertook to make. She stated to him coolly the accidental meeting of the lovers, and their consequent partiality for each other ; remarked the pale looks of Eleanor, and attributed them to her fear of encouraging an attachment displeasing to him. But, the obdurate father was immovable. He sent for his daughter. He ordered her to kneel down, and bade her think no more of her red-coated bravo.

Eleanor, trembling from head to foot, replied, " It is impossible, Sir, to restrain the thoughts ; but, to oblige you, I will swear never to change my name, without your approbation."

" And then you may safely leave off thinking of Mr. Huff-and-bluff, feather cap. No soldiers for my money ! I tell you what, child, if I thought you such a traitor to my blood, as to have a hankering after a red jacket, I would re-

joyce to see you stretched out dead before me. No, I will follow you to the grave first."

Eleanor retired in silence and tears, to take a last farewell of Verney. She threw herself into his arms. She wept on his bosom, unrestrained by the presence of Mrs. Hartop; and, as a last token of affection, gave him her picture, which had been recently taken, as a present for Mrs. Hartop, who was, at length, obliged forcibly to tear them from each other.

Verney, involved in difficulties, with two children to support, knew not which way to turn. His creditors pressed upon him on every side; and he at length formed the desperate resolution of embarking for the East Indies. He had the portrait of his wife elegantly set, and his own made and set in a similar manner, and each was engraved, as the reader has already seen; he consigned that intended for Eleanor to the care of Mr. Longford, and desired him to send it under cover to Mrs. Hartop. Having taken his leave of Eleanor by letter, he embarked with his two children for the East.

Captain Verney had confided to Mr. Longford his secret union with Eleanor; and as that gentleman had never heard of his previous marriage, it was natural therefore that the two children should be deemed by him the offspring of Eleanor. Thus originated the mistake, which had involved Maningham and Constance in misery.

Captain Verney lived not long after his arrival in India. Dying in the bed of honour, he bequeathed his children to the care of General



Campbell, who was then only a Major in the service. The youngest, it has been already seen, soon followed his father; and the Major, doubting whether the infant left to his charge had any real title to the name of Verney, had him baptised Frederic Campbell Maningham, which was the only name he ever suffered him to adopt. But to return to the history of the household of Mr. Baskerville.

The consequences of her rash conduct were severely felt by Eleanor. Her health and strength sunk under the continual anxiety she endured; and two years passed away in the most poignant and bitter anguish, which the certainty of her husband's demise rather increased than diminished. All the airy dreams which she had indulged, of being reunited to him, thus suddenly cut off; estranged from the world; shut up in a solitary mansion, and compelled to endure the moroseness of her father, which daily aggravated her sufferings, she was at times almost determined to put an end to an existence, which could promise her no hope of future alleviation or consolation. And, in gloomy despondency, she brooded over her secret sorrows, which increased by this indulgence to a sort of mental frenzy. Mr. Baskerville remarked this change in his daughter; and bitterly reproached her for it; accusing her of the most undutiful negligence to his comfort and happiness, forgetting how much his own conduct was to be blamed, and how little he had performed towards her the duty of a parent.

Eleanor received his reproaches in silence and tears, and he continued, "Dry up your tears, child, and put on your best looks, for I intend soon to dispose of you. I have an old friend coming to visit me to-morrow, and, if he likes your behaviour, why it's a done thing. His son comes here the week following, and you will then be tucked up."

"I should hope, Sir," answered Eleanor, "in a business of such moment to my future happiness, I might at least be allowed a negative voice."

"A voice, a negative voice!" cried Mr. Baskerville, with a sneer, "Why, yes, child, you shall be allowed a voice, but that is all. I hope you don't think I shall listen to that sweet voice of your's, if you raise it ever so loudly; so make up your mind. I have chosen a good comfortable yokefellow for you. And you have nothing to do but to make your courtesy to him, and be thankful. Every thing will be snug about you, and what can you desire more?"

Eleanor exerted all her spirit to reply. "I shall desire a great deal more, Sir. I shall marry no man, without I prefer him to all others. If you are so inattentive to my happiness, it is the more necessary that I should think for myself."

Mr. Baskerville, unfortunately for his daughter, was at this moment free from the gout. He rose from his seat. He seized both her hands, and laughed at her, loudly exclaiming, "You presume to contradict my will! you have a choice of your own! Does it want a cockade for for a plaything? Ha, ha, ha! But do you hear

me, Miss? You shall marry as I please, when I please, where I please, and whom I please. You shall be locked up, Miss. Do you hear that?"

"A prison can have no horrors," cried Eleanor, bursting into tears, "for one who has never yet known the blessing of liberty. Oh, Sir! your child has even envied the lot of the lowest cottager. You may, if you please, confine me, ill treat me, persecute me, but I will die rather than be forced into a hateful marriage."

Mr. Baskerville looked at her a moment with a countenance inflamed with rage. Then, letting fall her hands, he struck her a violent blow, which laid her senseless at his feet.

Mrs. Hartop, who had in vain entreated him to be calm, and permit her to reason with his daughter, now ran to the assistance of the helpless Eleanor. She threw water into her face, and she began to open her eyes.

Mr. Baskerville, in sullen dignity, quitted the room.

Eleanor had no sooner recovered her recollection, than she exclaimed, "Surely I am the most wretched of created beings! Every one else seems to have an object to love; but I am uniformly ill-treated. I tell you what, Mrs. Hartop, my father may think what he pleases, but, from this moment, he has cancelled every tie between us. I will marry according to his wish, if the creature he selects for me is but one I can live decently with, one who will treat me with the consideration due to my sex. But, I will not change one tyrant for another. This is my

final resolution. And I will die rather than relinquish it. I could have loved my father. I could have been dutiful to him. I might have been happy ! Had I been blessed with one who felt any portion of a father's tenderness, poor Verney might have been yet alive, and I should have been perhaps surrounded by the tenderest connexions. Who is it that has blasted all my prospects ? Who is it that has blighted my best hopes ? It is the father, who was bound by duty and nature to cherish and protect ! Has he not then set me at liberty to act for myself !”

No argument from Mrs. Hartop was necessary to her pupil. Indeed, she had none to offer. The conduct of Mr. Baskerville to his daughter would admit of no excuse or palliation, and was in itself an apology for all the imprudence of Eleanor. To reconcile the latter then to the destiny which awaited her, to endeavour to fortify her mind, and point out how she might avoid future error, was all that remained.

Mrs. Hartop recommended her to wait with patience the result of the interview, which was to take place between herself and the father of her intended lover ; to insist on being allowed time to form an opinion of the man designed for her husband : and then, if she found him capable of generosity, to confide to him every part of her former history. “ Let no concealment or disguise, my dear Eleanor,” continued she, “ ever subsist between yourself and the man you design to marry. A thousand inevitable circumstances might betray you to him. Even the future legitimacy of your children must de-

pend on your being married under your own proper name. Neither could you ever hope for happiness, while conscious of disguise and dissimulation. In a marriage formed without previous attachment, contracted by parents as a sort of legal barter, you may not perhaps find the affection of a lover. But, it rests with yourself, if the man has common generosity, to secure his friendship, by the openness and candour of your conduct; by your sweetness of temper, and your attention to the domestic regulations of his family."

Eleanor heard this advice in silence, and she flattered herself she should be able to follow it. And as there was no alternative, she consented to wait for the coming interview, in apparently patient submission to the commands of her father.

The old gentleman was introduced, Eleanor met with his approbation, and his son was brought the day following to the house of Mr. Baskerville. But the moment she fixed her eyes upon him, Eleanor determined never to become his; and every hour she passed in his society confirmed her in this resolution. His manners were vulgar, conceited, and opiniated. His person was loathsomely ugly, and his ideas were coarse and selfish. A trembling seized Eleanor whenever he approached her. She looked at him with horror, and sickened at the self-satisfied familiarity with which he addressed her.

Chance, in this instance, became her friend, at a moment when she least expected it. The old gentleman quarrelled about the settlements,

and at length parted in an irritated manner, with anger depicted in his countenance.

Mr. Baskerville, however, consoled his daughter, with "Never mind, Nell! If one won't, another will. I'll look about me for a match for you, never fear. But do you hear, girl, I'll have no hankering after the young fellow. It can't be brought about now. I never can forget the old fellow's miserly temper."

Eleanor assured her father she would never think any more of the young gentleman. Mr. Baskerville, highly satisfied, exclaimed, "For once you behave as you ought to do; and, as you have been docked of the wedding finery, take these ten guineas; set yourself off in the best manner, and by G— we will all go to the next hop at —; there we shall see all the young fellows in the neighbourhood. Who knows, I may pick up a son-in-law amongst them."

Eleanor had never yet passed her father's mansion, even to pay a visit. The thoughts of this ball then half-distracted her. What she should wear, how she should dance, what she should say, by turns occupied her thoughts. And, with an air of painful restraint and timidity, she made her *entre* into the ball room, at the appointed hour, attended by her governess and her father. The uncommon beauty of her person, the singularity of her dress, for she had been her own mantua-maker, the simplicity of her manners, and the downcast modesty of her countenance, insensibly attracted all eyes, while the presence of her father in a moment ex-

plained her origin. And Miss Baskerville, the heiress, was buzzed about in all corners of the room. A gentleman of elegant manners, but plain person, was soon after introduced to her by the name of Mr. Mountstewart, as a partner for the evening, and she joined the dancers with him.

Mr. Mountstewart was all animation and gaiety. He was enraptured with his partner; and, ere the time came which was to separate them, had determined to ingratiate himself with her father, and lay siege to her in due form. The offer was unexceptionable. Mr. Mountstewart asked nothing of Mr. Baskerville but his daughter; and Eleanor was a second time introduced by her father to a lover; and exactly three years after her first marriage, entered again the temple of Hymen. The story of her first marriage had been communicated to Mountstewart by Mrs. Hartop, who biassed by partiality, represented every circumstance in the favour of her pupil. Mountstewart, naturally romantic, saw nothing in the errors of Eleanor, but the consequence of her father's unnatural severity.

The young couple, immediately on their union, set off for London, where they were again married, as has been already stated; and soon after returned again to the country, to watch over the declining health of Mr. Baskerville, who, a complete martyr to the gout, survived this marriage two years, during which time they resided entirely with him. Eleanor had no children in this period, and, mortified at this circumstance, Mr. Baskerville made a will; in

which he bequeathed his estates, in default of male issue, from his daughter to a distant branch of his family, leaving his son-in-law and daughter only a life-interest in the property; and always having in his eye the misconduct of his own wife, consigning it immediately to this relative, should a separation take place between them.

So uncertain are human affairs, that he had not been dead three months, ere Eleanor found herself pregnant; and the birth of a boy was now eagerly anticipated, as a means of securing the Baskerville property. The event, however, answered not their wishes, for Mrs. Mountstewart, at the proper time, was safely delivered of two daughters—Eleanor and Constance, the subjects of these memoirs.

Soon after this event, business called Mountstewart to London. His wife accompanied him thither, leaving Mrs. Hartop, who still, to oblige Eleanor, superintended the household, entire mistress of the Devonshire mansion. The world had hitherto been unknown to Mrs. Mountstewart. The boundless attachment of her husband denied her nothing, and she soon entered with avidity into a fashionable circle, which was rendered the more fascinating to her, from her want of affection for her husband, whose kindness and consideration had failed to make that impression upon her heart, which they certainly deserved to have made. She was gay, she was good natured, she was obliging. But far from rejoicing in his presence, she rather felt his absence from her a relief. The marriage on her side had not been from choice, but rather from a wish to be eman-



cipated from her father's mansion, and a fear, that, if she escaped this marriage, one less eligible might be proposed to her. She beheld in Mountstewart only a new master, and as he imposed no restraint upon her inclinations, and indulged her to the extent of her wishes, she was happy. Mountstewart idolized his wife. He saw nothing in her love of dissipation but the effects of the education she had received. He saw nothing in her conduct but the bright rays of youthful vivacity, and a heart elated with the novelty which surrounded her. He flattered himself, that the race once run, she would return again to her domestic occupations, and cheerfully fulfil all the duties of life. But, alas! an event soon happened, which destroyed all his hopes, and left him solitary and desolate. A gentleman, of the name of Craycroft, lately returned from India, was introduced to his acquaintance. An intimacy commenced between them, and Mr. Craycroft lived in the habitation of Mountstewart. Accident discovered to Eleanor, that he had belonged to the same regiment with Verney, and from that moment she found his conversation inexpressibly interesting. From him she learned every particular relative to her deceased husband. She was never tired in his presence. It had been once her intention, an intention the generous heart of Mountstewart had never attempted to thwart, to seek for the children of her lost Verney. This intention, the death of one, and the adoption of the other by Major Sir Archibald Campbell, rendered unnecessary. Yet of this boy she was fond of talking, and secretly entertained the wish of one day securing him to

her family, by uniting him to one of her daughters. Colonel Craycroft was a man of the world. He liked the company of Mountstewart. He liked the style in which he lived. He was fascinated by the beauty of Eleanor, and could not but perceive the preference she gave to his society; while the unsuspecting Mountstewart lavished on them both, all that friendship and affection could bestow. And, though Eleanor daily squandered large sums in vanity and folly, though she sunk largely at the gaming table, he neither reproached nor restrained her: and to free Colonel Craycroft from pecuniary difficulties, he had become bound for him, in a sum too considerable to be parted with without inconvenience. Colonel Craycroft, without having formed any deliberate design on the chastity of Eleanor, nevertheless found her society necessary to his happiness. While he stepped not beyond the bounds of friendship, in his conduct towards her, he flattered himself this indulgence was innocent: while Eleanor, immersed in dissipation and folly, pleased with his assiduities, careless of the opinion of the world, and intent only on the enjoyment of the present moment, looked not beyond it.

By degrees, however, as time rendered Colonel Craycroft more familiar with Mrs. Mountstewart, the warmth of his expressions increased; and as that dangerous enemy to female virtue, vanity, lurked in the bosom of Eleanor, it was no difficult matter to render her sensible of the passion she had inspired. The buds of indiscretion, by degrees, expanded into blossom, and

brought forth the bitter fruit of remorse and repentance.

Mountstewart perceived something in the conduct of his wife, which gave him cause for suspicion. He expostulated with her upon it; but Eleanor, too proud to bear advice, where she had as yet only found indulgence and complaisance, resented his admonitions, and flew to the gaming-table for relief. Mountstewart cooled in his conduct towards Craycroft, and the latter withdrew his visits from the family. Had Eleanor been commonly prudent, all might yet have been well. For she had not yet passed the fatal barrier, which consigned herself, her husband, and her children, to disgrace and infamy. She would have abhorred herself, could she have supposed it possible she could thus err. In confident security, she tempted the very destruction which awaited her, by opposing the wishes of Mountstewart, and running to every place of dissipation about town.

Three or four months elapsed in this manner, and the embarrassment of his fortune, by her frequent losses and extravagance, insensibly soured the temper of Mountstewart. Money was no longer at his command. And when Eleanor one day, in a careless manner, demanded a replenishment for her purse, he replied, "Indeed, Eleanor, I have none to give you. It is high time to talk seriously together upon the state of our affairs. I know not which way to turn. I have forestalled my rents. I have sold all the timber upon my Welch estate. But, if you would consent to leave town, the sale of our fur-

niture would satisfy every small demand; and, with such an income as we have, we might easily retrench our expences, till every other is settled."

"And how am I to fulfil my engagements without money?" cried the mortified and disappointed Eleanor.

"While I was able to supply your extravagancies," said Mountstewart, in a tone of bitterness, "I did supply them. Nor will I now refuse you, even though attended with the greatest inconvenience. But husband it well, for by Heaven I can give you no more! The week after next we must go to Landrenden."

"Do you not intend being at Lady ——'s to-night?" asked Eleanor, with affected unconcern, yet without making any other remark.

"It is for those only who are happy in their family, and easy in their circumstances, to frequent such places," said Mountstewart. "I am neither."

"As to your circumstances," answered Eleanor, "you have yourself pointed out a way to retrieve them; to the country I have no objections, but surely in town people ought to mix with the world. As to happiness, it is useless to lament the loss of a thing, which I believe never existed. There are, no doubt, many strange tempers on the earth. Mine may be one of them. And as, in London, I should wish always to live in a crowd, so in Wales I should uniformly desire to be alone. I dare say your Welch residence will bring to my memory the old mansion

of Baskerville Abbey. I shall have a new keeper, that is all."

Mr. Mountstewart turned angrily from her. "Eleanor, Eleanor, Mrs. Mountstewart, have I deserved this? If you did not intend to live in harmony with me, for God's sake, why did you marry me?"

Mrs. Mountstewart made him a low curtsy, and with provoking insolence, replied, "Because my papa bid me!"

Mr. Mountstewart paced the room in speechless agony, and, suddenly stopping, he looked at her a moment in silence, then clasping his hands, he exclaimed, "Oh, Eleanor! reflect a moment! we are wedded to each other. You have sworn, in the sight of Heaven, to love, honour, and obey me. I have rigidly performed every duty towards you. My heart has never wandered from you, even for a moment! Oh! consider then, that we are bound to each other, and do not make the irrevocable link a mutual, a galling chain! So intimate is the union between us, that you cannot wound me, without injuring your own happiness. You cannot risk my fortune, without wounding yourself. You cannot forfeit your reputation, without consigning yourself, your children, and your husband, to everlasting ignominy. This is the last time I will ever address you upon this subject. But, I conjure you, be circumspect! the path before you is thorny and difficult, but everlasting satisfaction will follow your steps, if you persevere in pursuing it. Every step you now tread is pregnant with danger. Oh! despise not the warn-

ing voice! There is one fault which my boundless love cannot overlook. There is only one which it will not!"

"In the security of conscious innocence," cried Eleanor, proudly, "I defy the shafts of malevolence. However, as you appear to think so meanly of me, we had better quit town to-morrow. Out of the way of temptation, I must be safe. With a vigilant guardian to superintend my conduct, and watch all my motions, I cannot err."

"You go to Lady Roper's to-night?" said Mountstewart, inquisitively. "I cannot attend you, and you will meet——"

Eleanor interrupted him. "I shall meet no one, for I will stay at home."

"Will you?" said Mountstewart, softened by this concession: "and will you forget what has passed between us? Will you believe, that if I loved you less, I should be less anxious about your conduct?"

"Say no more of it," exclaimed she, gaily, "lest I should remember how foolishly I have myself talked, and feel obliged in my turn to ask pardon."

A reconciliation being thus effected, Mr. Mountstewart went out to fulfil an engagement, and Eleanor betook herself to the harpsichord. But, insensibly, her hands forgot their office, and she sat involved in painful ruminations. All the kindness of her husband presented itself before her, and she mentally exclaimed, "I have certainly used him very ill. He deserves it not. I wish I had never come to town, or

rather I wish I was well out of it. I was not married to him against my own consent, but assuredly against my own inclinations. What a fool have I been! I will, however, see Craycroft no more. And having made this resolution, she felt more at peace with herself; and, on the return of Mountstewart, received him with a cheerfulness and good humour, to which he had long been a stranger. The evening was passed in harmony. They discussed their intended retreat into the country. And Eleanor joyfully acceded to the proposal of quitting London the following week.

The next day she took leave of her acquaintance, determining to spend the intervening time in making preparations for her journey, and purchasing the few articles she stood in need of, previous to her retreat to Landrenden. In one of those visits, she unfortunately met Colonel Craycroft. He appeared surprised at hearing she was to leave London so soon; and, as he handed her to her carriage, said—"May I have the honour of paying my respects to you previous to your departure?"

Eleanor coloured, hesitated, and, at length, said, "I dare say Mr. Mountstewart will be happy to see you."

Colonel Craycroft pressed her hand, and, bowing, left her.

Several times during the remainder of the day, she attempted to summon resolution to mention the circumstance to her husband. But she found it impossible, and at length gave up the idea. She blamed her own want of fortitude.

She was uneasy at the expectation of her visitor, yet she dared not make a particular exclusion, and deny herself to the Colonel, lest that order, by being communicated to Mountstewart, should inform him of their having met; and she suffered the matter to take its course.

The Colonel, who knew well the hours when Mountstewart was absent, had no intention of meeting him. He waited in a shop, at some distance from the house, and, having seen him pass, walked quietly to visit Eleanor. He found her alone. His presence agitated and discomposed her. She could find no subject on which to converse. Every idea was distracted. "You are going to leave us, Mrs. Mountstewart," said the Colonel. "How many hearts will ache at your absence! It is really cruel of Mr. Mountstewart, to take you from town at this season of the year."

Eleanor attempted a reply. "My own wishes," said she, "coincide with those of Mr. Mountstewart, I have had enough of racketting, and I really long for a little quiet."

"Really!" cried Craycroft, in a tone of incredulity, "really! and you have no regret, no pity, for the poor devils you leave behind you!" He scrutinized her countenance as he spoke.

Eleanor fixed her eyes upon the carpet. A crimson flush overshadowed her features. She rose and walked to the window.

Colonel Craycroft followed her. Her eyes met his, and sunk again under the expressive and ardent glance which he cast upon her. "And you really do not pity any one you leave



behind you?" repeated he. "Are you then so deeply attached to rural felicity and Arcadian scenes, as to lose at once all memory of those you had once honoured with your friendship? Happy, happy Mountstewart, how blessed is your lot! And can you not then pity the unfortunate? Can you not, charming Mrs. Mountstewart, spare one sigh to the wretched, wretched Craycroft? Has he resigned his heart, his whole heart, and will you not bestow upon him one solitary glance of pity? Oh, Eleanor! my life, my soul, my love!" he sunk upon his knees before her, "pity, pardon, and do not hate me!"

"Rise, for God's sake, rise!" cried the agitated and trembling Eleanor. "I am undone, if any one sees you thus! Rise, I entreat, I implore you! If my husband should return and see you, I am undone!"

"Is there not one ray of pity," continued the subtle pleader, "in your bosom? Only pronounce my pardon, and say you do not hate me. Only speak one word, and I will bless you!"

"What can I say, what can I do?" cried she frantically. Oh! you know, you know but too well, that I cannot, that I do not hate you! You know but too well——"

"What do I know!" exclaimed he, passionately. "Dear, dear Eleanor, complete the sentence! Surely you have nothing to fear from a love so pure as mine. Give me then the only consolation I am capable of feeling, the consolation of knowing that you pity me!"

More and more agitated, Eleanor again conjured him to rise. She clasped her hands wildly, and threw herself into a chair. Colonel Craycroft rose from his knees. He flew to her. He seized her hand. He pressed it to his lips. She was no longer capable of withdrawing it. She sobbed convulsively, and covered her face with her handkerchief. What followed, I shall leave to the imagination of my readers. Suffice it to say, that the imprudent Eleanor permitted him to see all the influence he had obtained over her heart, and, ere they separated, had confessed a mutual passion. Fearing to be seen by Mountstewart, Colonel Craycroft at length departed, yet not till he had obtained from Eleanor a promise to meet him the following day.

Every succeeding interview involved Mrs. Mountstewart still deeper in the path of error; and, on the day preceding her departure from town, she flew to the place of appointment, to take a last farewell of Craycroft.

It is impossible to describe this interview. Suffice it to say, that, learning from her the route she was to take the next morning, and learning also that she was not to be accompanied by her husband (whose tenderness for his wife and children had induced him to send them on several stages, to prevent the fatigue to which they must otherwise have been subject in so long a journey), he determined to precede her, and meet her again at Reading, where the first day's journey was to terminate, and where she was to remain till joined by Mountstewart. To con-

clude at once this part of my history, he did meet her there. They spent the evening together, and an insurmountable bar was for ever placed between herself and her husband.

Mountstewart passed the day after the departure of his wife and family, in the arrangement of his affairs, in the disposal of his house and furniture, and settling the demands of his tradesmen. Every thing being finished to his satisfaction, on the following morning he threw himself into a chaise, and travelled post to join his household. But what a misfortune there awaited him! Eleanor had left her children and family, and fled with Colonel Craycroft.

The rage, the agony of Mountstewart, was indescribable. He called for his pistols, ordering four horses to his carriage, and commanding the servants to convey his children immediately to Landrenden, set off in pursuit of the fugitives. He arrived at Dover, whither they had bent their way, only a few hours after them, and rushed into the apartment where they were seated. Eleanor shrieked, hid her face, and attempted to fly. Mountstewart rushed after her, caught her hand, and exclaimed, "Oh, Eleanor, Eleanor! have I deserved this? How have you rewarded my tenderness! How have you blasted my hopes! How have you withered all the future prospects of your innocent children! Come, and complete the destruction, the devastation you have made! come, and behold me die at your feet! Here, Sir," continued he, addressing Colonel Craycroft, "take one of these. Finish

the diabolical work you have begun. One of us must fall!"

Eleanor threw herself on the ground between them. "Oh, Craycroft! Oh, Mountstewart!" cried she, "forbear. Give me that dreadful weapon, if you really love me! Craycroft, give me the pistol. Mountstewart will not touch you unarmed. Give me the pistol." She caught his arm, she clung to his knees; but he gently pushed her from him. "Oh, do not fire!" cried she, frantically, and again catching the arm which held the pistol, and clinging to him, "touch, touch him not: Oh, Craycroft! for God's sake! for pity's sake! hear me! first kill me, and then complete your work! Oh, Mountstewart! on me wreak your vengeance! I deserve, I deserve it all!"

Colonel Craycroft struggled to free himself from her grasp, but she put her hand to the pistol, and forcibly held it. It went off, and she sunk senseless on the ground.

Mountstewart threw down his weapon, and flew to her assistance. "You are now, Sir, I hope, satisfied. Your work of darkness is complete," said he. "You have now destroyed your victim eternally. Oh, Eleanor, Eleanor! look up and receive my pardon. Fly, Sir, fly, procure medical assistance, and then leave us for ever!"

"I believe, I think I am dying!" cried the half-fainting Eleanor, raising her head, and speaking inarticulately. "Pardon me, Mountstewart, pardon me. And oh, let your revenge end here. Let me in my last moments—but you cannot,

you will not——” Her eyes again closed, and she was quite insensible.

The people of the house, alarmed at the report of the pistol, now entered the room, and the lifeless Eleanor was conveyed to bed, where a surgeon soon after attended to examine the wounds she had received. Her arm was much shattered, and her side severely lacerated. But he assured Mountstewart the wounds were not mortal, and that the only danger to be apprehended was the fever, which must necessarily follow. “But keep her entirely quiet,” continued he. “That is all that can be done. The event we must leave to Providence.”

Mountstewart listened to him in silent agony. At one moment, he resolved to forego his vengeance, and take Eleanor again to his bosom. At the next, resentment effaced every gentler emotion, and he determined to wipe out the injury he had sustained in the blood of the offender, and to banish for ever from his presence his unfortunate and guilty wife. But the fond, the cherished affection, which still lingered at his heart, trembled at the state to which that unhappy wife was now reduced. She was, perhaps, hovering on the verge of eternity, loaded with conscious guilt, suffering severe pain, and exposed to the contumely of the world. Could he leave her in this situation? Ought he to see her again? Might not his resolution, his fortitude, sink under the effort? Might not a momentary impulse of compassion draw him from the path, which honour and justice pointed out as the only one he could with propriety follow? Was not

his dishonour certain? Had she even sought to justify herself? He threw himself into a chair, and, without speaking, fixed his eyes on the ground. A servant entering the apartment delivered into his hand the following note:—

“ IF Mr. Mountstewart is inclined to pursue the vengeance, which has already commenced in blood, he knows where to find Colonel Craycroft, who is ready to afford him every satisfaction he may demand. Colonel Craycroft designs setting off for town immediately.”

Mountstewart threw the note upon a table, and groaned convulsively. Then clasping his hands, exclaimed, “Yes, thus it is the villain, the destroyer of female innocence, the seducer, can lay waste the fairest work of nature, and then triumph in his crimes! Oh, Eleanor, Eleanor! could I have believed this possible! Yet, yet I will have vengeance!”

The surgeon took up the note, and instantly comprehending the whole affair, looked at Mountstewart compassionately.

“You must not risk your life,” said he, “in a cause like this. If you have received an injury, the law is open to redress it.”

“If I have received an injury!—if!” repeated Mountstewart, in a tone of bitterness, “good God, if! Did I not receive him to my bosom, make him a part of my family? Have I not injured my own fortune to sustain his? And has he not dishonoured the wife of my own bosom?”

Has he not cast an indelible stain on my unsullied name? Has he not blighted all the promises of my youth? Has he not soiled the inheritance of my babes? Should he then escape, to lay fresh snares to entrap new victims, to bring infamy and dishonour into the bosom of domestic innocence and virtue?"

"It is not for mortals to question the dispensations of Providence," replied the surgeon, with a dignified and impressive air. "Our duty is to submit. The arrow that flyeth by night, and the sickness which destroyeth by noon day, are instruments only. In his hands are the issues of life and death. Is it not then a defiance of his authority, to indulge in the angry passions of revenge and hatred? Your enemy will, sooner or later, feel his wrath. He cannot fail to suffer; for it is the certain consequence of a vicious indulgence to be followed by remorse and repentance. Your children have already experienced the direst of human calamities. For, what can compensate to them for the loss of a mother's tenderness? What would become of them, should they also lose a father? For the sake then of your children, for the sake of her who bore them, whose bitter feelings of regret and remorse would be aggravated by your fall, for the sake of your immortal soul, I conjure you to reflect, I conjure you to lay aside your revenge, and not heap up to yourself a load of anguish, which will add terrors to the hour of dissolution."

Mountstewart covered his face with both hands, and the big drops of bitter anguish rolled down his manly cheek. He spoke not. The surgeon

continued. "Take a legal revenge!" "Never!" cried Mountstewart, with energy. "What! expose my unhappy Eleanor to the scoff of fools! Render indelible the disgrace of my children! Hold their wretched mother up to infamy! Oh, never! no, though she has wounded me in the tenderest point, though she has blasted for ever all the promises of my future days! Heaven is my witness, that I still love her, with the purest, the most generous affection; and would, if possible, spare her all the anguish she has heaped upon me."

"The same consequences will follow, the same exposure take place," replied the surgeon, "if you prosecute your revenge on Colonel Craycroft. Be warned, therefore, I entreat you, by one, whose age and experience have fitted him for the task of an adviser. Take this night for consideration, and do nothing rashly. It is not for man to judge or punish. Should you succeed in destroying your enemy, what would you gain by the action? Nothing, but the fatal consciousness of error. Remorse would ever follow your steps. You would become an alien to your native land. Your children must either become exiles, or lose the protection of a father. Leave the seducer then to his own heart. Leave him to the chastisement of the Almighty; and make the best of an unfortunate situation."

Mountstewart pressed the hand of the surgeon, and promised to reflect calmly on his future plans, and take no step without consulting him. Having again seen his patient, the surgeon departed.



Mountstewart passed the night by the bedside of the hapless Eleanor, who, lulled into insensibility by the opiates of the surgeon (whom I shall henceforth call by his proper name, Mr. Wilson), knew not of his presence. Compassion for her sufferings overpowered every other sensation, and he wept over her frailty, with the same feelings of affectionate regret, that a fond father might have experienced in the destruction of a beloved daughter. To watch over her, to restore her to health, to guide her steps into the paths of virtue, to recall and reclaim the wanderer, was now his first wish. This once effected he determined to separate himself from her for ever, to devote himself entirely to the education of his children, and, by the strictest economy, repair the injury he had sustained in his fortune, by his imprudent generosity to Colonel Graycroft, whom he no longer designed to seek, in pursuit of revenge. "No," cried he, mentally, "I will leave him to himself, and to those thorns, which in his bosom lodge to goad and sting him."

By slow degrees, Mrs. Mountstewart recovered her strength and her health. But the agony of her mind was indescribable. The kindness of her husband, his attentive solicitude for her recovery, his very presence, was a dagger to her heart. A thousand times was she on the point of throwing herself at his feet, imploring his forgiveness, and conjuring him to abandon her. But his calm and dignified silence restrained her. All the blessings she had forfeited crowded at once upon her imagination. All the tender-

ness, the gentleness of Mountstewart, his affectionate indulgence, his unbounded generosity, were constantly before her, and seemed to render her a monster of ingratitude. The flagrancy of her own conduct filled her with self-abhorrence, and the bitterness of her repentance atoned in part for her errors. Yet, to live under the same roof, to profit by the generosity of Mountstewart, to feel herself unworthy of his kindness, and still to receive it, to subsist on his bounty, was impossible. "No," sighed she, "I cannot, I must not endure it. I will leave, I will fly from him for ever. I will labour for my subsistence. I will endeavour to convince him that I am not quite unworthy. Oh that I had but listened to his advice in time!"

Mountstewart had in the interval been devising plans for the future support of his wife, when separated from his protection. To live with her was no longer in his power. She had violated the sanctity of this union. She had broken the matrimonial bond. He could not again take the adulteress to his bosom. He could no more place her at the head of his family, nor consign his daughters to the protection of the mother who had disgraced them. But he could place her in a secure retreat. He could administer to her wants. He could watch over her future conduct. He could restore her to the approbation of her own heart, and prevent future errors. And this he resolved to do. She was now quite recovered, and able to travel. And he at length forced himself to speak. "Eleanor," said he, in a voice firm, yet tender, "listen to me in si-

lence. I wish to converse with you dispassionately on your future plans. It is the only time Fate may ever permit us to meet. You must be conscious, that the tie which united us to each other is broken, broken for ever. I mean not to reproach you. What is past is without remedy. I forgive, I pity you."

Eleanor rose from her seat. She threw herself upon her knees before him. "You forgive me!" cried she. "You pity me! Oh, Mount-stewart! you are too, too good. But can I forgive myself? Humbled in the dust, self-abased, I acknowledge my past errors. I acknowledge that I am unworthy of your kindness, that I am criminal. Yet Heaven is my witness, that I would give worlds to retrieve my past errors, to become once more deserving of you! Yet I plead not to be reinstated in your favour. I know, I feel it to be impossible. Yet, even now, I would die to render you happy. Cast me then from you. Abandon me to infamy. Choose some more worthy object to partake your affections. I deserve, I deserve it all."

"Rise, Eleanor, rise!" exclaimed Mount-stewart, with emotion, "rise, and hear me patiently! I can form no new alliance. I shall neither expose nor disgrace you. While you conduct yourself properly, you shall still retain my name. But do not disgrace it. Retrieve your past errors by the propriety of your future conduct. The means of subsistence I will afford you; but you must see your children no more."

Mrs. Mountstewart clasped her hands, and groaned convulsively. "Oh, my children, my children! Must I indeed see you no more! Oh, my poor babes! oh, Mountstewart, Mountstewart! Recall those words, recall those words! Oh, my children, my children!"

"I have reflected and determined," said Mountstewart, calmly. "It is impossible you can again see them. Separated from their father, how can a mother approach her children? how can she bear to blush in their presence? I have decided, and I am fixed."

Eleanor, thunderstruck by the determined manner in which he spoke, lifted up her hands and eyes in silent agony. "What, never!" repeated she, incoherently, "never, never, see my sweet children more! Oh, my God, my God!"

"They will be taught to believe that you no longer exist," said Mountstewart, solemnly. "They will be instructed to respect the memory of the author of their being. Her frailty they will never know. They will be tutored to love virtue, to hate vice. Dare you then stand corrected before them? Dare you call the blush of shame into their innocent countenances, and bid them shun the path which has seduced and destroyed their unfortunate mother? Can you bear infamy and dishonour? Can you bear the reproaches of your own offspring? Can you bid them follow the path of virtue, when your example has been so fatally full of error?"

"Oh, my children, my dear children, my beautiful, my blooming children! must I part, part with you for ever? Have I indeed seen you

for the last time? Oh, Mountstewart, Mountstewart!"

"As you hope for my forgiveness," exclaimed Mountstewart, passionately, "as you hope for the forgiveness of Heaven in your last moments, as the only reparation you can now make to your unfortunate children, as the only reparation you can make to their unhappy father, I conjure, I entreat, I implore, I command you, swear never to see them more."

Mrs. Mountstewart groaned convulsively, and sunk insensible at his feet, where she lay for some time without motion. He threw water in her face. He rang for assistance. She was conveyed to her own apartment, where she soon after recovered her recollection.

The first use she made of her awakened faculties was to meditate an escape from her husband; and, packing up every thing she had with her, she determined to set out during the ensuing night for London. She wrote to Mountstewart, and leaving the letter on her dressing-table, contrived to send her effects to the coach, which was to depart early the following morning. Then disguising her person as much as possible, she left the inn, and, hiring a chaise from the nearest place, proceeded to the next stage, where she designed being taken up by the coach. Nothing retarded her motions. And when Mountstewart awoke in the morning, the letter underwritten was presented to him by the woman who had been hired to attend Mrs. Mountstewart.

"BEFORE you receive this letter, the unhappy and guilty Eleanor will be far distant. She will have withdrawn herself for ever from your presence. Humbled in the dust, she is an object of compassion, not resentment. Pity her then, most generous of men, and she will bless you. You ask me, Mountstewart, you ask a mother to resign her children. Conscious that I have deserved to part with them, I submit to your will. Conscious that I am unworthy of the name of mother, I renounce it for ever. May the bitterness of this moment, and my obedience to your will, expiate in part the offences I have committed against you. Yes, I resign my children to you for ever. Oh, Mountstewart! what do you not undertake! You must yourself supply to them a mother's tenderness. Shelter them, support them, watch over them. Be warned by the errors of my education, and be the friend, as well as the father, of your children. They will then learn to look up to you in every difficulty, and repay you in affection for all the sufferings and solitudes you have endured for them. If I was once dear to you, if ever I possessed any place in your heart (and surely I have no reason to doubt it), transfer my share in your affections to my unfortunate and innocent children. And may the God of infinite mercy bless you in them, and render them all that a fond and indulgent father can wish! Oh, Mountstewart! there are moments when I could almost wish myself annihilated. How have I trifled with all the blessings of Providence; and when I might have been happy;

when Virtue, beaming soft smiles, courted my acceptance, and solicited my society, how have I disdained her advances, trampled upon her laws, and lost myself! To look back upon my past happiness, is, indeed, agony. What was I? What am I? The cherished wife of your bosom, idolized, caressed, and courted, is now an outcast from society; a shame, a reproach to herself and her connexions; guilty, despicable, lost to herself, her husband, and her children! Oh, my God! pity and pardon me! Mistake not my intentions. I am no longer the slave of vice. I fly not from you to the arms of another. Oh, no! it is my future purpose to toil for my daily sustenance, and by the severest penitence atone for my past errors. Then I may hope one day to be reunited to my children, purified by past suffering, and to magnify his name, who has thought fit to punish. Adieu, Mountstewart! farewell for ever! You will hear of me no more. Be satisfied of my obedience. I will die rather than offend you. Yet suffer me to hope I may be permitted to hear of my children, through your banker's. This is all I ask. Never shall they know their mother, if you command her concealment. May the Almighty Providence preserve and keep you!

“ELEANOR MOUNTSTEWART.”

Mountstewart, on the receipt of this letter, threw himself out of bed, almost breathless with agony. His first impulse was to follow his unhappy wife, pardon her past errors, and take her once more to his bosom. But a moment's re-

Section restrained him. To reunite himself to her was impossible. He could no more confide in her conduct, no more trust her smiles, no longer rely upon her principles. Degraded and debased, she had cast herself from his protection, she had abandoned her children. Could he be secure, that, even a second time, she had not left him for the arms of another? Could he depend upon the assurances of one who had already deceived and betrayed him? Surely not. What then was to be done? He would leave her to her destiny. He would retire to Landrenden, and live only for his children. He would for ever banish the memory of Eleanor from his heart. Her name should no more be spoken in his presence. His children should never know that their mother existed. He wrote to his bankers, and consigned a considerable sum to the use of his wife, charging them to disburse it to her necessities, provided she lived in retirement, unaccompanied by her seducer. That she would apply to them for information of her children, he well knew. She had herself entreated to receive information through that channel, and it was his wish, that the means of subsistence should be in her own power, and that she should not be thrown on the generosity of Craycroft for support; but have the power of returning from the evil of her ways. Having so done, he retired to his solitary Castle, and passed the residue of his days as has been already related.

Mrs. Mountstewart, in the mean time, hastened to London, where she resided for several



months, in entire seclusion, devoting her whole time to the severest penitence for the fatal errors of her past life. All the delusions of youth, all the false colouring, which had deceived and betrayed her, became at once exposed to her view, and sophistry in vain sought to find an excuse for the flagrancy of her past conduct. She was disgusted with herself, with the whole world, even with life itself, and earnestly prayed the Omnipotent to shorten her days. The small-pox, with which she was soon after attacked, gave her no alarm. She patiently submitted to the regimen proposed to her, passed the intervals of pain in preparations for her end, and waited the termination of the disorder with resignation.

The Almighty, however, was pleased to spare her life. But her beauty, that fatal rock which had blasted and shattered her frail bark, was gone for ever. It has been remarked by some one, I think by St. Evremond, that "the last sighs of a handsome woman are more for the loss of her beauty than life."

In the present instance, however, he was mistaken. Mrs. Mountstewart beheld the ravages made in her features by disease with satisfaction. A sudden hope sprung up in her bosom. She might once again behold her children. She might, without fear of discovery, be known to them. Mountstewart himself would not, could not recognize her features. Life was no longer valueless. She would watch for an opportunity. She would see her children. She would live.

near them, unknown. She would teach them to love her.

Unfortunately, this scheme was easier in theory than practice. For, as she had determined to subsist by her own exertions, and to live independently of the bounty of her husband, it was scarcely possible to effect it. Giving her address to the bankers, in case any thing material occurred in her family, she accepted a situation, which soon after offered, of governess to a young lady; in which place she continued till the marriage of her daughter with Lord Frederic Montague, only changing her title from instructress to friend, as her pupil grew up from youth to womanhood.

Under the assumed name of Wilson, she then occupied a place in the household of her daughter, as the reader has already seen. After her departure from it, she felt herself called upon, both by gratitude and inclination, to attend the accouchement of her former pupil, who was married to a gentleman of very considerable fortune in Scotland. This visit was concluded by the fatal termination of that accouchement, and by the serious injury her own health had sustained in attending the deceased. And she was on her return from this expedition, when chance so unexpectedly introduced her to her second daughter. To continue near that daughter for the short remnant of her days, to expire in her arms, became now her sole wish. And, drawing on her bankers for money to accomplish this purpose, she drew down upon herself all the dis-

coveries which have been recounted in the former part of this history, by the information which that draft afforded Maningham concerning her.

## CHAP. XXIV.

I long to lay this painful head,  
And aching heart, beneath the soil,  
To slumber in that dreamless bed,  
From all my toil."

CONSTANCE passed the night by the sick-bed of her mother, whose countenance exhibited the paleness of death; and, as she hung over her in silent despondency, she attempted to form resolutions for her own conduct in future. But the agitation and confusion of her mind unfitted her for reflection, and entirely disabled her from deciding on the steps she ought to take. It appeared as if the birth of Maningham had been concealed from her knowledge, only to involve her in misery. It was revealed to her at a moment when the knowledge could avail her nothing, when she had just reasoned her mind into tranquillity, and brought her heart to receive the attentions of Sir Charles without disgust, when she had irrecoverably engaged herself to him, and when the conviction of his firm and unchangeable attachment to her rendered every idea of cancelling that engagement disgraceful.

and ungenerous. Yet, to part with Maningham for ever, to destroy all the happiness of his future days, to blast the promises of his youth, to forego a love so tender, and to which, in spite of every obstacle, she still fondly leaned, was almost impossible. To carry to the bosom of Sir Charles an estranged heart, to deceive him with an appearance of happiness, to hide the thorn of regret, which rankled in her breast, and to feel a consciousness of error, even while outwardly performing her duty, seemed a trial too great for her fortitude. And to call on the generosity of Sir Charles, by an avowal of her feelings, was tacitly to demand of him a release from those ties which bound her to him; was tacitly to demand from him the sacrifice of himself, to render her happy. She knew not what to do. Ardently desirous to acquit herself with propriety, to fulfil every duty, to act rightly, she saw herself placed in a situation of the utmost difficulty and danger. Affection, a first fond affection, the impulse of the heart, drew her towards Maningham; while honour, gratitude, and a positive engagement, bound her to become the wife of Sir Charles. Could she fulfil this engagement? Could she consign herself to his arms, when her heart revolted from it? Could she profess, in the sight of Heaven, to love him alone? Could she promise to do so, while fatally conscious that another reigned in her bosom? All those feelings of attachment, which the idea of their connexion with each other had for a time repressed, now, that it no longer existed, returned in their full force. She

would have thought no danger too great, no suffering too violent, to have encountered for the sake of Maningham. She could have felt no misery, she could have endured every deprivation, if blessed with his love, if consoled by his presence. But could she requite the generosity of Sir Charles with ingratitude? Could she abandon him, at the very moment when he came to claim her as his bride? Ought she to abandon him, even at the foot of the altar?

Every passing moment seemed to encrease her agony. The situation of her mother, if possible, augmented it. She was now unable to leave her bed, and wasted to a mere shadow. A restless fever preyed upon her incessantly; and the vital spark appeared wearing so fast, that it was scarcely possible she could linger till the return of Sir Charles.

As Constance contemplated her decaying frame, as she beheld all that now remained of her who was once so eminently lovely, and so much the object of admiration, she could not help clasping her hands, and mentally ejaculating, "What are all the trials of this world, which endure but for a moment? A little, a little while, and it will be my turn to be followed to the tomb. Then let not any selfish gratification draw me from my duty, or steal from me that secret source of satisfaction, which, in an hour like this, must either be my consolation, or my reproach. Oh, my God! support and preserve me!"

Morning dawned, while Constance, alternately occupied by assisting the invalid, and indulging in melancholy reflection, still watched by the

bed-side. She had formed no resolution. She was incapable of forming any. And, in trembling anxiety, waited to see if Maningham would attempt to introduce himself again into her presence. She wished to see him once more, to take a last farewell; to assure him of her friendship. "Alas!" cried she, softly murmuring, "is such an assurance necessary?"

Mrs. Mountstewart had just awakened out of a transient slumber. She complained of thirst, and Constance brought her a bason of chocolate. The invalid looked in the face of her daughter, and softly whispered, "I wish Sir Charles was returned. I am going, my sweet child, visibly. It is impossible I can linger much longer. I wished to have seen you married; to have secured to you the protection of a man of honour; to have ensured your happiness. But perhaps it may not be; I may have deceived myself. Tell me, my dear child, have I innocently committed an error? Have I assisted in drawing you into an engagement in which your heart has no share? If I have," continued she, rising in her bed, and emphatically raising her clasped hands, "for God's sake say! speak candidly, confess the truth. Be warned by the fate of your mother. And oh! give not your hand to any human being, however amiable, if your heart entertains the slightest preference in favour of another!"

Constance sobbed convulsively; but she spoke not. Mrs. Mountstewart continued, "Is Mr. Maningham amiable? His language, his manner, the emotion I witnessed in both of you, has

painfully impressed upon my imagination a conviction, that you have been intimately acquainted with each other, and that you are, or have been; mutually attached. Oh, Constance! if this be, indeed, the truth, if your heart is not entirely free, tremble to ally yourself to another. Let no fear of the laugh of fools deter you. Throw yourself upon the generosity of Sir Charles, and if Maningham is the object of your choice, proclaim it to the world. It is false honour which would lead you to fulfil an engagement, at the price of your own and Sir Charles's happiness."

Constance hid her face in her handkerchief, and wept. "The first object of my affections!" cried she; "why should I deny it? was Maningham; his character is above all praise; his merit inestimable. A fatal, an insurmountable bar seemed to be placed between us, and forbid our union; else I had long since been his. To his kindness was I indebted for the protection of Lady Jane Mackey, and with his consent did Sir Charles become my suitor. What then remains to be done, but to fulfil an engagement, from which I can no longer retract with honour?"

"But the bar which separated you from Maningham is done away. Is it not?" asked the invalid.

"Another is substituted in its place," said Constance, with diffidence. "And I believe I should act unjustly, were I now to break with Sir Charles. I have so high an opinion of Maningham, that I think he will never voluntarily



offend or injure me. And I hope time will wear him from an attachment, which will no longer be virtuous, after I have given my hand to Sir Charles. I hope that I have sufficient fortitude to subdue in myself every inclination incompatible with my duty. I esteem, I honour Sir Charles; and, that nothing may in future throw a damp upon our confidence, shall submit every circumstance which has passed to his knowledge."

Mrs. Mountstewart made no reply, and the subject dropped.

A few minutes after a servant rapped at the door, to inform Constance Mr. Maningham was below, and wished to see her.

Constance rose to meet him, but an instant's reflection shewed her the impropriety of receiving him in her present circumstances, and, hastily seizing a pen, she wrote as follows:—

"Constance Mountstewart desires to express her warmest thanks for the numerous kindnesses she has received from Mr. Maningham. To return them is not in her power. She wishes him every happiness the world can give. The severe and dangerous illness of her mother, combined with other circumstances, prevents her having the pleasure of seeing him."

Having dispatched this billet, she anxiously waited to see him depart. But ~~not~~ even the satisfaction she felt in having performed a duty succeeded entirely in quelling those bitter feelings

of regret which assailed her bosom, at the thoughts of seeing him no more. She beheld him at length cross the Castle court, and, though his face was turned from her, fancied she could perceive his dejection, in the slow and melancholy step with which he departed. All that he had once been to her, all the graces of his form, all the dignity of his character, started afresh to her memory. "I who am so much indebted to him," cried she, mentally, "I who would die to render him happy, I am obliged to wound and pain him." Tears started into her eyes, and, to avoid being seen by her mother in this situation, she hastily quitted the room, first ringing the bell for the attendance of Martha.

"Lord, Lord, Miss Constance!" exclaimed this good creature, as she crossed her upon the staircase, "you will quite upset yourself. You've shed a very ocean of tears already. And then the good, the kind-hearted Mr. Maningham, looks like the very ghost of himself. This comes of false-heartedness. Now, to my mind, if I may presume to speak it, there is no nearness like the nearness of a first love. It's the very sentry of the heart, as one may say, even the heart itself."

Constance, unable to reply, rushed by her in silence, and, flinging the shawl, which carelessly hung on her shoulders, over her head, hurried out at the back gate of the Castle, into the deep shade of the overgrown walk which sheltered it behind; striving by motion to forget herself, and all those painful images, which the sight of Maningham had awakened, and endeavouring to

collect her thoughts, and reason herself into some degree of composure.

But all her efforts were in vain. The image of Maningham, rendered unhappy by her, still haunted and pursued her, and she found it impossible to form any determination for the future. She, however, dried her eyes, and prepared once more to attend her mother; and for this purpose turned her steps towards the house, when all her resolution forsook her at the sight of Maningham.

So unexpected was the meeting to both parties, that each started at the approach of the other. But Maningham, instantly recollecting himself, exclaimed, "pardon Miss Mountstewart, dear Constance, pardon this intrusion. I did not expect to see you. I meant to obey you. Yes, cruel as you are, I meant to resign myself to your will. Accident, and a thousand tender recollections, brought me to this spot. It was once the seat of my felicity. Fatal, cruel, horrible suspense, how has it terminated! What have I not suffered! What have I not still to suffer! What has the whole world to offer, if you, Constance, reject me!"

"You speak of my rejection," cried Constance, with emotion: "You call that a rejection, which is impelled—" She paused. The colour mounted into her cheek. Propriety restrained her tongue.

Maningham's eyes sparkled. A momentary expression of rapture shot across his countenance. He caught her hand, and fervently clasped it between both his. "What has Sir

Charles felt and suffered for you, to what I now feel? Mine is the first title to your favour, mine was the voluntary promise of your pure heart. Oh, Constance! if that heart is unchanged, is there, ought there to be any change in our situations? Surely your own feelings are paramount to every engagement. Your own happiness should be the first consideration. Sir Charles cannot wish to bind you, when he knows how you are situated."

"I must not hear you," answered Constance, endeavouring to disengage her hand. "I dare not hear you. I am painfully perplexed and confused. Leave me, for mercy leave me, and do not aggravate my feelings by entreaties—I cannot hear without emotion."

"If ever you loved me," cried Maningham; "if ever my happiness was dear to you, I entreat, I implore you to pause. Oh! do not ratify an engagement, which may, perhaps, render us both criminal in the sight of Heaven, without due consideration. The only bar which ought to disunite us, is broken; it is no longer a crime to love you. Beware then how you forge new fetters to enslave us both."

"Leave me, I conjure you, leave me," replied she, in a voice scarcely articulate. "I know not how I ought to act. My first wish is to conduct myself properly; but I am continually fated to error. I would give worlds to render you happy. I would sacrifice my existence to do so. I would die rather than wound the generous heart of Sir Charles. Can I retract from my engagement to him with honour, or can I, by fulfilling

it, render him happy? Oh, Maningham! once you were my friend. For pity's sake, then, spare me. Why should you pursue me, only to render me wretched; when you know that to be yours is not in my power?"

Maningham hastily let her hand fall. "Since I am indeed so hateful to you; since I render you wretched by my presence, it is time to leave you. It is fortunate, Miss Mountstewart, very fortunate, that you can so easily reconcile your inclinations to your engagement. I was a fool, a madman, to think of changing your resolution. I have no title to offer you. Oh, no!" cried he, with encreasing wildness, pacing the gravel walk: "I have no title to offer you, I have nothing to offer you in change for a title. This heart, this idolizing heart, is unworthy of your acceptance. My devotion, my affection, my engrossing attachment to you, are as nothing in the comparison. I never possessed your love. I am unworthy of your pity. Yet your tears will water my grave. It will be no crime then to weep even for me."

Constance leaned against a tree, and sobbed aloud. She turned her streaming eyes towards Maningham. She clasped her hands, exclaiming, convulsively. "Good God! do I deserve this? Oh, Maningham! is there any thing which I can do to prove my esteem for you? Is there any thing I ought to do? You know, you know but too well your own power over me. For God's sake, for my sake, for your own sake," throwing herself on her knees before him, "have mercy on me! You are too sure of your

own power, yet abuse it not. Oh! did no ties restrain me, was I this moment free!"

"Rise! for mercy rise!" exclaimed he, wildly flying to raise her. "Constance, Miss Mountstewart, rise, I cannot bear to see you thus. What is it you ask? What is it you command? Put my obedience to the test. Ask even for my life, my happiness, it is yours. But, for mercy's sake quit that posture."

"If you still love me," answered Constance, with a tone of impassioned energy, "if ever you loved me, leave me; I conjure you leave me, while I retain my senses, while I have power to bid you. Oh, Maningham! is it my happiness you seek, when thus you torture and distract me? I believe my engagements indissoluble. Oh, do not add to my distress, the bitterness of self-reproach! Do not render me culpable in my own eyes, and force me to meet Sir Charles with the repugnance of a criminal!"

Maningham attempted to take her hand, but she rose from her knees, and retreated several paces. "Will you not give me your hand?" asked Maningham; in a tone of reproachful solemnity. "Will you not bid me farewell?"

Constance gave him her hand, but she trembled so violently, she could scarcely stand.

"If I thought you happy," said he, with a look of earnest enquiry, "I think I could be satisfied."

"It is impossible I can be miserable, while I act up to what I think my duty," replied she. "The greatest blessing upon earth would be unenjoyed, if attended by a conviction of not de-

serving it. Let us endeavour then, my friend, to walk cheerfully in the path Providence has chalked out for us. And I beseech that Providence eternally to bless you."

She attempted to withdraw her hand, and would have left him, but he held her fast.

"A moment," cried he, "a little moment, and I lose you for ever. Do not then grudge me the power of gazing on you! It is the last time. Heaven is my witness, that, in resigning you, I lose all that could make life desirable. Oh, Constance! my resolution fails. What would I not give, what would I not suffer, to recall the once happy moments of my life? These walks; these scenes, were once the scenes of my felicity. They bear witness to an affection, pure as your own virtue, and warm as your own benevolence. How happy have we been! how happy might we still be, if——"

"I cannot, I must not hear you," said Constance. "I must go. Indeed, indeed, I must. How strange will this meeting appear, should any one interrupt us! I entreat, I implore you to leave me."

A servant at this moment entered the walk.

Maningham kissed the hand of Constance, and, bowing dejectedly, rushed out of the avenue; while Constance, carelessly flinging her shawl over her face, to conceal her emotion, walked forward to meet the domestic.

"Sir Charles is arrived, Madam," said the servant, approaching her. Constance started. "I thought you must have seen him," continued the girl, without noticing her mistress's emo-

tion, for he came the back way to the Castle, and could scarcely pass the avenue without seeing you."

Constance could not trust her voice to reply. She trembled excessively. What must Sir Charles think of her conduct, if he had seen her alone, and thus familiarly conversing with Maningham? Why did he return before the appointed time, and how could she meet him without embarrassment? These were the thoughts which crowded rapidly to her mind, as she approached the house. She did not on her entrance ask for Sir Charles; but, flying to her own apartment, threw herself into a chair, and burst into tears.



## CHAP. XXV.

*Lovely and gentle, and distressed :*

BATTLE OF FLANDER.

THE idea of having seen Maningham for the last time, was, in spite of all her efforts, the forcible object of her melancholy thoughts. There was something beyond pain in the idea of seeing him no more. All the graces of his form, all the virtues of his heart, all the rare qualities of his mind, presented themselves before her ; and a faint sickness rose at her breast, as she recollected her engagement with Sir Charles. To meet him with composure was impossible. She even half persuaded herself not to see him. Yet she could form no pretext for denying herself to him, which would not awaken suspicions to her prejudice. A thousand times she resolved to open her whole heart to him ; to paint in strong colours the agitation she felt, and her fears that she was incapable of rendering him happy. But a natural timidity of character, a dread of what he might think, the fear of forfeiting his esteem, and of subjecting herself to the animadversions of the malevolent, restrained her. Then again

she would blame herself, for the acuteness with which she felt these trivial incidents ; ask if she was conscious of having done any thing intentionally wrong ; and whether she had not met Maningham accidentally ? But though she could answer all these queries satisfactorily, she could not so easily satisfy herself with respect to the interest she still felt towards him. A certain something at her heart painfully informed her, that he still occupied the first place in her affections ; and that all the good and amiable qualities of Sir Charles had failed to make that degree of impression upon her, which she ought to feel for the man she designed to marry.

These reflections contributed not to her composure. The irritation of her mind increased. She was irresolute ; dissatisfied with Sir Charles, with Maningham, with herself, with the whole world. Yet, feeling the necessity of rousing herself, she hastily dried her eyes, rose from her seat, and, assuming a semblance of tranquillity, descended into the dining-room to meet Sir Charles.

Sir Charles appeared scarcely less agitated than herself. He stammered out something like an apology, for returning so long before the time appointed ; which she answered by saying it was an unexpected pleasure. " Certainly unexpected," said Sir Charles, with emotion,—" but as to pleasure, you, Constance, can best say, whether my return affords you any or not. If I was certain of my welcome," continued he, with an air half reproachful, " I would make no apologies. But how can I assure myself of that, when

I see the legible traces of tears on your expressive countenance? My first wish is to make you happy. Without such a hope, even the possession of your person will fail in rendering me so."

Constance burst into tears. "I have suffered so much since your departure," answered she; "I have made so miraculous a discovery; I have been so anxious about our poor invalid, that I dare say I am altered. But I have no strength to enter into particulars. Suffice it to say, that Mrs. Wilson is my mother."

"Your mother!" repeated Sir Charles, with a look of astonishment. "Your mother! Mrs. Wilson, your mother!"

"My own mother; my unfortunate, my guilty, my penitent mother!" Constance covered her face with her handkerchief, and sobbed convulsively. Sir Charles folded his arms round her, and pressed her to his bosom. His tears flowed freely. Neither spoke for some time.

Sir Charles, at length, as if suddenly recollecting himself, started, pressed the hand of Constance, and exclaimed, "May I see, may I speak to Mrs. Wilson? Oh, Constance! ever lovely and beloved, your happiness, your peace, your satisfaction, are dearer to me than my life-blood. I would die, I would die to render you happy. Suffer me to see your mother. I must see, I must converse with her. More than my life hangs upon this interview!"

"She is almost too feeble for conversation," answered Constance, timidly. "She is unequal

to any effort. "I will, however, ring, and send her word you are here."

"If she is indeed so weak," said Sir Charles, forcing himself to speak, "why should you, my sweet Constance, delay my happiness? I have brought the necessary papers with me. Some trifling alterations are alone wanting. These I can get done to-morrow. Oh, then, put it beyond the power of Fate to separate us, and suffer me to partake with you in the painful attendance on your sick parent. Give me a legal right to partake in your solitudes. Be mine; be mine the day after to-morrow."

Constance could not speak. She almost gasped for breath.

Sir Charles continued; "The ceremonies of the world add little to domestic happiness. You are above punctilio. You want not the meretricious aid of external splendour. Think on what I have said, and, if you can oblige me, shorten the term of my probation, and you will lay me under an everlasting obligation."

Constance would have spoken, but the domestic who had been sent to Mrs. Mountstewart, at that moment returned, desiring Sir Charles to walk up stairs. Kissing the hand of Constance with an air of gallantry, he followed the servant to the apartment of the invalid.

What passed during this interview, I shall leave to the conjectures of my readers. Suffice it to say, that after two hours spent in the sick chamber, Sir Charles descended the stairs, took his hat, ordered his servant to follow with a bun-

dic of papers, and in great agitation quitted the house.

Constance, astonished at this circumstance, which she perceived from her window, hastened to the apartment of her mother, who, entirely exhausted with the foregoing conversation she had held with Sir Charles, had just sunk into a transient slumber. Constance dismissed Martha, and took her accustomed station by the bed-side, where she again sunk into a train of melancholy reflections, without being able to collect her thoughts, or form any plan for her future conduct. Yet she determined not to sully the purity of her own mind, by the retention of any circumstance which had passed since the departure of Sir Charles. She half, nay more than half, wished to break off her engagement with him. But was it possible to do this without forfeiting his esteem; without subjecting herself to the censure of the world? She felt that it was not. "I must summon resolution," sighed she; "I must exert all my fortitude, or forfeit my own self-esteem, by a want of candour. Yes, the confession must be made! Sir Charles is worthy of my confidence. He will not abuse it. If I become his wife, it is proper, it is right, that I should have no concealments from him."

Painful as this effort was, yet Constance supported her resolution, and resolved to make it at the first moment of meeting Sir Charles; and, having once made up her mind, felt herself in a great measure relieved from an insufferable burden; and impatiently waited for the dinner hour, when she felt certain of his return. But hour

after hour stole away, and Sir Charles came not. Constance in vain attempted to eat. She was sick at heart. The longer her confession to Sir Charles was delayed, the greater would be the impropriety of making it. Her courage seemed to forsake her. She looked out of the window. She listened to every opening of the Castle gate. Sir Charles's servant at length arrived, and the following note was put into her hand :—

“ YOUR mother has conceded to my wishes —she consents to the acceleration of our union. I will not believe that my charming Constance can be unnecessarily punctilious on an affair in which my happiness is so deeply concerned. I have taken the settlements with me to have the necessary alterations made, and will attend you early on the morning after to-morrow, bringing the papers with me. To sign them will only detain us a few minutes. Oh, then, charming Constance! pardon my absence. I go to procure the licence, which is to seal my happiness, which is to make you as firmly and eternally mine, as I am already your's,

“ Faithfully and devotedly,

“ CHARLES ROUVERIE.”

Constance let the letter fall from her trembling hand, and sunk back in her chair. Mrs. Mountstewart, perceiving her emotion, asked what was the matter? Constance, unable to reply, put the letter towards her. Mrs. Mountstewart read it in silence. Neither of them spoke for some time. The invalid at length said ;—“ Why are

you so agitated, my dear? I acknowledge the change about to take place awful, but will the delay of a few days render it less so? Sir Charles is every way deserving of your esteem. And I confess it will contribute to the satisfaction of my last moments, to leave you in the protection of a man of honour."

"But surely this hurry, this extreme haste, is unnecessary," said Constance. "The delay of a few days cannot be material to Sir Charles. And I own, that it would be to me extremely gratifying. I wished to speak to Sir Charles. I had much to communicate to him, but he affords me no opportunity. What, what am I to do?"

"Recollect yourself, my sweet child," cried Mrs. Mountstewart, with energy. "Remember my unfortunate situation. It is impossible I can survive much longer. If you delay your marriage even for a week, I may not live to witness it. A death-bed, my Constance, is a trying scene. You will want support. You will want consolation. How happy have I been in the idea, that Sir Charles will bestow it! On your love, then, I depend for the gratification of this my last wish, for the consolation of my death-bed."

Constance clasped the hand of her mother, and wept.

Mrs. Mountstewart went on:—"I need not, my beloved daughter, impress upon your mind the duties of the life you are about to enter. You are already sick of the delusive pleasures of the world. You have my melancholy example to

deter. You have your sister's fortunate escape for a warning. Ever consider Sir Charles as your first friend. Make his bosom the repository of your most secret thoughts. Let his approbation of your conduct, next to that of your unerring monitor, be your first aim. You will then be a blessing to him. He has a heart to be sensible of your value." Constance continued to weep; and, after a short pause, to recover her breath, Mrs. Mountstewart went on. "I had once, like you, happiness in my own disposal. Every blessing I could have desired, was within my reach. But I was fatally, blindly infatuated to error. I was obstinate in wrong. And what have been the fruits of my delusion? Bitter, bitter and unavailing repentance, injured health, a wasted form, a heart filled with anguish, a severity of torture, which no language can describe. The best days of my life, the meridian of my existence, has been passed in tears. I have been an alien to my family. I have been dead to my own children. I have trembled before them. Oh, Constance! what are the gratifications of sense? Where are the pleasures of impure delight, that we should barter our best hopes in their attainment? I, I, fatally for myself, can speak from experience." The hectic of a moment crossed her pale cheek. A violent cough succeeded. She was near suffocating. Constance flew to her assistance. She, however, recovered herself in a few moments, and with increased earnestness, yet with hesitating voice, continued:—"I am now sinking to the grave at an age when I might reasonably have expected many



years of existence, the victim of vice, and the unrestrained indulgence of lawless passions. I fancied myself above the weaknesses of humanity, and I fell below the vilest of my sex. Oh! my child, look, look not on me. Pity me not. I am an outcast from society. Your father, your father bade you fly me. He denied me the name of mother, lest I should contaminate with my vices my own offspring."

"Oh, my mother, my mother!" exclaimed Constance, kneeling at the bed side with clasped hands, "in mercy spare me, spare yourself! My father would have joyed to behold me the consolation of your sick-bed. Know you not, my mother, that our Almighty Parent rejoiceth in the returning penitent? Does not your past anguish, will not your present sufferings plead with him? Will he not reclaim the wanderer, bind the broken-hearted? Oh, my mother, my dear mother, be comforted!"

"You speak like an angel," cried Mrs. Mountstewart, raising herself in her bed, and fixing her eyes upwards. "Beautiful are the feet of those who speak glad tidings of great joy. Oh that I could fix my thoughts above! There, there alone I can find rest. Yes, my child, I will hope that my pardon may be sealed. You compassionate me, Constance; you pity me. But you cannot, you do not esteem me. No, I have forfeited my claim to your esteem. I depend now on your benevolence, your pity."

"Wound me not, my mother, my dear mother, by such an idea. Believe not that your child can ever fail in the respect due to you."

Her attention, her affection, her dutiful anxiety, will still watch over you. Oh! do not doubt her, even for a moment. To be always with you, to be permitted to wait on you, to efface from your remembrance every past sorrow, will be her happiness, her pride, her glory!"

Mrs. Mountstewart shook her head, and waved her hand. "Oh, Constance!" answered she, "that cannot be. Where is that sweet Lethæan draught which can banish the memory of my past transgressions? Who can speak peace to my perturbed spirit, or raze out the written troubles of the brain? Oh! no, it is impossible. Your affection, your kind commiseration, your dutiful attention, wound, even while they delight me; by painfully reminding me, how little I deserve the blessing of such a child; by painfully reminding me, that even you must blush to acknowledge me as your mother in the face of the world. I have forfeited my place in society. And should your filial piety attempt to stem the tide of public opinion, by introducing me once more into it, you would soon perceive that you had erred, by the neglect we should mutually experience. Nor is this wrong. Put self-interest out of the question. Could you, as a parent, consent to the introduction of your own child, to one who had failed in the performance of her various duties, who had lost the chief ornament of her sex? Would not every mark of respect and attention shewn to an adulteress weaken the fence of virtue, by instructing the young to err, with hope of equal impunity?"

"But so many years of sorrow and repentance, so much bitter suffering, an error so soon renounced, and deprivations so nobly sustained," said Constance, warmly, "these, my mother, will surely speak to the heart of every one; these will afford an example of the fatal consequences of error, and these will point out the only effectual atonement of it."

"My kind, my affectionate child," answered Mrs. Mountstewart, with animation, "your own goodness misleads and blinds you. A line must be drawn between virtue and vice. And who can distinguish between real and affected penitence? But we talk of what cannot long concern either of us. I have no interest in life, for my own draws near its close." A momentary pause followed, and she continued:—"I bless God for his infinite mercy, in allowing me time for repentance. I bless God, that you and your sister have received from others, that advice and those instructions I have failed to communicate to you. And I pray fervently, that my unhappy example may warn you of the danger of trusting too much to your own strength. The pleasures of vice last but for a moment, but the pangs of remorse wound for ever."

The sound of a carriage drawing up to the outer gate of the Castle interrupted this conversation. Constance drew towards the window, wondering at the strangeness of the circumstance. At the same moment the bell at the gate rang violently.

Constance flew down stairs to prevent the intrusion of company, and give orders to the ser-

wants to admit no one. But before she reached the hall, Jonathan was at the gate, and a party of travellers were advancing towards the house. And, in another moment, she felt herself clasped in the arms of her sister, her long absent Eleanor, "My Eleanor, my Constance, my dear, dear sister," was all that either could utter for some minutes. Constance at length exclaimed:—"How blessed is the moment of your return! Eleanor, my dearest Eleanor! how happy I am to see you! Where is your husband? Where is Lord Frederic? Oh! I see you are quite, quite happy. Your looks speak contentment and felicity."

Lord Frederic at this instant joined them. He folded his arms round them, and affectionately kissing Constance, he said:—"You are in part the author of my happiness. I am come to thank you, to bless you."

Eleanor slipped from the arms of her husband, and running back to the gate, left Constance to the embraces of his Lordship. Tears spoke her joy at this meeting. She hung upon his bosom, and received his caresses with a more than sisterly warmth. "So unexpected is this return," cried she; "so happy am I to see you; so delighted to behold your second union, that I know not what I do or say. This is the most felicitous moment of my life. But where is Eleanor?"

"Let us go to her," answered Lord Frederic, drawing the arm of Constance within his:—"I am now the happiest of men. But you do not look well, Constance. You have not that sweet smile of serenity on your face which I once re-

member." He looked earnestly at her; Constance fixed her eyes on the ground.

Eleanor at the moment joined them with her boy in her arms. "Look, Constance!" exclaimed she, "look at my darling. Is he not grown wonderfully? Neither the old Earl's nursing, nor the Marchioness of Baybrook's spoiling, have hurt him. I think the sun never shone on a more lovely creature. There, my boy; that is your aunt Con. Give her a kiss. She was your first nurse."

Constance took the child from her sister, and half devoured him with her kisses. "He is very like you, my Lord," said she, leading the way to the house. "He is beautifully fair."

"We may thank the Marchioness for that," answered Eleanor, with a smile. "I assure you, when we first met the boy, he was wrapped up in cotton, and shaded by an immense straw bonnet, to preserve his fine skin. But you must not bestow all your love on him, for there is a little Miss in the coach, born under a southern sky, half as brown as her nurse-maid, and quite as frolicsome as her mamma."

"Oh, do, my Lord, fetch the child," said Constance. "Come, Eleanor, we must get into the house and converse. You must be tired. You have come a long journey."

"Only two stages to-day," replied Eleanor, with vivacity:—and I solemnly protest that my mind has been so highly set, during the whole of this tiresome journey, that I have felt, thought, and talked of nothing but you, and the surprise I have been preparing for you. But where is

old Martha? I expected she would have been one of the first to welcome my return."

"She cannot come to you," said Constance, hesitating. "She, she——"

"Is not dead, I hope?" asked Eleanor, with emotion.

"She is well," replied Constance. "But she has taken my place by the sick-bed of a most intimate friend; one, my Eleanor, with whom you must become acquainted. But I will order some refreshment for you," continued she, ringing the bell. "and, if you will excuse me, just go and see my nursery, and give Martha an opportunity of speaking to you, after your Lord returns with the babe."

"I have ten thousand things to ask you," said Eleanor, "and can only part with you for a few minutes."

"And I have more than ten thousand to communicate," returned Constance. "I never was in greater want of a friend to advise me than I am at present; and you are come very opportunely to my relief."

"And I am, moreover, so well calculated to advise," said Eleanor, with a smile, taking her sister's hand. "But, of this, my dear Constance, you may rest assured, that what is wanting in wisdom and experience, shall be amply made up in the warmth, the more than sisterly warmth, with which I respect and love you. My Lord too will advise and assist you. And, though I say it, there is no human being more capable of giving advice; more generous, more tender, or more affectionately interested in your happiness."

Of all the follies I ever was guilty, and I confess myself convinced of a great many, there is none I ever half so much repented of, as having trifled with a soul like his. He was formed to make a matrimonial life happy, and to shine surrounded with family connexions. You know how all these smiling propensities had like to have been cast away. I am now the most blessed of human beings."

Lord Frederic made his appearance at this moment, followed by a negro girl, with the infant. After some time spent in caressing the babe, and congratulating each other, the travellers sat down to a cold collation, while Constance went to visit her sick mother.

## CHAP. XXVI.

"There is a calm for those who weep,  
A rest for weary pilgrims found,  
And while the mouldering ashes sleep,  
Low in the ground,

The soul, of origin divine,  
God's glorious image, freed from clay,  
In Heaven's eternal sphere shall shine  
A star of day.

The sun is but a spark of fire,  
A transient meteor in the sky,  
The soul, immortal as its sire,  
Shall never die."

CONSTANCE approached the chamber of the invalid with a painful presentiment of the scene preparing for her, for she felt the necessity of preventing the accidental disclosure of her sister's arrival, by announcing it herself to her mother. She immediately, as she entered, dismissed Martha; and having enquired how Mrs. Mountstewart found herself, sat down by the bed-side: "I have been very ill, very ill indeed," said the invalid, raising herself in her bed; "the sudden arrival of your sister, which I learnt from the unconscious exclamations of Martha, has, I believe, been too much for me: it was totally unexpected, and my agitation was extreme. But I am better now. All is as it should be. The Almighty has been very good to me; better,



oh! better than I deserve. If I had a wish upon earth, beyond that of beholding you settled, it was to see my Eleanor, to bless her before I die. I shall see her husband, the worthiest of human beings. I shall also see my grand children. After all my transgressions, I shall die in the midst of my family." Mrs. Mountstewart paused. She could scarcely breathe. She clasped the hand of Constance. "You, my beloved child, must prepare your sister for this interview. I will see her to-morrow. You can tell her my sad history. You will teach her to pity, to pardon me. Oh, Constance! *this, this—*." She was unable to articulate. "This," continued she, at length, "this was what I have prayed for through life. This is all that I dared ask of Heaven. Yes, I shall close my eyes in the bosom of my family. My children will remember me with pity. They will weep over me."

Constance burst into tears. "Do not talk of dying, my mother. I cannot bear it. Oh, you may yet live, live to behold the happiness of your children; to add to it."

"The longest existence must one day terminate," said Mrs. Mountstewart, with energy. "The happiest of the happy may be called hence in a moment, even without preparation. God has been merciful to me. I have had time allowed me. The bitterness of death lies chiefly in the preparation for it; in withdrawing ourselves from the world, and its delusive pleasures; in separating ourselves from our friends. I have long since bade adieu to the world. I am recon-

ciled to the idea of parting even with my children, by the conviction that my life could not add to their felicity, nor to their honour; by a conviction, that were they to acknowledge their affinity to me, they would entail my disgrace upon themselves. Yet to believe that I shall be remembered by them with kindness, will soften even the pangs of my last moments."

"You must not talk," groaned Constance, convulsively. "You will exhaust yourself. You will destroy me. Oh, my mother, in pity compose yourself!"

"I am composed, I am resigned," said Mrs. Mountstewart, faintly; "you will devote the remainder of this day to your sister. I will see her in the morning. I shall endeavour to attain composure and strength for the interview. You must have arrangements to make for these unexpected visitors. You have preparations for the morning after to-morrow. I request then that you will leave me to the care of Martha, till after the ceremony. She is, perhaps, a better companion for me than you are, for with her I am constrained to silence."

Martha soon after making her appearance, Mrs. Mountstewart insisted on her daughter's quitting her. Constance once more returned to her sister and Lord Frederic.

The children and their attendants being dismissed, Eleanor required of her sister an explanation of the words she had used in the morning. And Constance, entreating her patience and the forbearance of Lord Frederic, began a full and circumstantial history of all that had occur-

red to her since the commencement of her acquaintance with Maningham.

The first part of her narration, and her doubts respecting their connexion with each other, astonished and perplexed them. They looked at one another with a sensation not to be described. But when Constance, in the course of her history, mentioned her belief, that her mother still existed, Eleanor could no longer contain her emotion. She burst into an exclamation of delight. All the truth flashed at once upon her mind. The mysterious conduct of Wilson was unravelled. "I have seen her, I have seen my mother," cried she, clasping her hands. "She has watched over; she has preserved her child! My heart told me she was no common character. My heart told me I ought to love her. Good God! and have I indeed permitted my mother, my own mother, the author of my being, to wait on me! Yes, she to whom I owed duty and affection; she, to whom I ought to have bowed with filial reverence and obedience, even she has performed towards me the office of a servant! Yes, my mother, my own mother, has waited on me! Wilson was my mother. I know it, I see it, I feel it. I shall see her again."

Lord Frederic caught the hand of Eleanor, and pressed it to his heart. She burst into tears. Constance wept with her. A pause of considerable length followed. Lord Frederic held a hand of each. He looked at them alternately. "My dear, my beloved Eleanor," cried he, tenderly, "my kind, my affectionate Constance, how sweet are the feelings of nature, when thus she speaks

to the heart!" Tears stood in his eyes. His voice was inarticulate. Constance smiled, pressed his hand, and continued her narrative.

The feelings of her auditors underwent various revolutions as she proceeded in her story. Neither again interrupted her, till she came to that part where she met with her mother. Then Eleanor again broke silence, exclaiming: "Where, where is she now? Only tell me if she be alive; if she be indeed my mother; if she lives, and I can see her?"

"Mrs. Wilson lives," said Constance, mournfully. "But she is in the last stage of a consumption. She is, indeed, Eleanor, our own, our own mother."

"She is in the house, she is in the house!" cried Eleanor, rising from her seat. "My mother, my own mother, is in the house! I will go, I will fly to her!"

Constance caught hold of her sister's clothes. "You must not go," cried she, terrified. "You cannot see her. She is very ill."

"Eleanor, my life, my dear Eleanor, recollect yourself," said Lord Frederic. "Much preparation must be necessary ere you can see your unfortunate parent. To rush suddenly into her presence, with all your feelings thus awakened, would be to destroy her at once. Recollect yourself, my best love, and be calm."

"When I knew not that she was my mother," screamed out the almost frantic Eleanor, "I loved, I adored her. Oh! how anxiously have I wished to see her once more! but now I must kneel to her. I must ask her blessing. I must

comfort and console her. I must pay her the duty of a child."

"She knows you are here," said Constance. "She desires to see you. But she wishes to defer the interview till to-morrow. She is almost exhausted. A painful combination of circumstances has contributed to harass and depress her. She can linger with us but a short time. Oh, Eleanor! it is our duty to support and comfort her; not to disturb her last moments, by a violence of sorrow which can avail nothing."

Eleanor reclined her head on the bosom of her Lord, and wept like an infant: Lord Frederick and Constance in vain attempted to comfort her. The sudden revolution in her feelings, the quick transition from ecstasy to anguish, the combined effects of the various passions, which by turns assailed her, was too much for her fortitude and her strength. Several hours passed away ere she was able to attend to the conclusion of Constance's narration.

This narration, however, by insensible degrees, diverted her feelings from her mother, by exciting her fears for the future happiness of Constance. She lifted up her hands and eyes, threw her arms round the neck of Constance, and with trembling eagerness exclaimed. "Are you then indeed irrecoverably engaged to Sir Charles?"

"Poor, poor Maningham!" said Lord Frederick, musing. And then, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he asked: "Where is Sir Charles Rouverie? I knew him once, well. He was generous and humane. I cannot think he

would hold you to an engagement which you wish to dissolve."

"I know not what I ought to wish or to do," said Constance, with a countenance full of diffidence and doubt. "I believe it is now too late to retract. Sir Charles is gone to hasten the writings. He returns no more to this house, till the very moment of our union."

"And when is that?" asked Eleanor, hastily.

"The day after to-morrow," replied Constance. "It was my mother's wish to hasten the ceremony. She fixed the time with Sir Charles."

Lord Frederic walked about the room in evident discomposure, repeating to himself, "the day after to-morrow. To renounce an engagement even at the foot of the altar is almost impossible. It would subject you to a thousand inconveniences, ten thousand animadversions. Sir Charles is truly amiable. He tenderly loves you. To desert him now would be to act unjustly, to render him unhappy. And, to call on his generosity to renounce the woman of his choice, would be ungenerous. Yet, if you really prefer Maningham, if you feel a repugnance to Sir Charles, if you are convinced that you cannot love him, that you cannot be happy with him, or render him so, it will be better to say so at once. If you wish it, I will follow him."

"Not for the world," said Constance, fervently. "I respect, I honour Sir Charles. I would die rather than intentionally wound him. I believe I am incapable of any selfish motive."

Yet I feel," and her voice softened into tenderness, "for poor, poor Maningham. I would have wished to converse with Sir Charles, to have related to him every incident which had occurred. I ought to have done so, but I was taken by surprise, and wanted resolution. Now, however, I fear it is too late. It will, it must look, as if I designed to renounce my engagement with him."

"Then you do not wish, you do not intend to renounce it?" said Eleanor, in a tone of enquiry.

"I know not what I wish, what I intend," answered Constance, in agitation. "My mind is in a state of anarchy and confusion. I wish to act with propriety, to do what is right. If once convinced that I did so, I think my sufferings would be over. I only fear that I have not been sufficiently ingenuous with Sir Charles. He has certainly a right to my confidence. He deserves it."

"Where shall I find Sir Charles?" asked Lord Frederic.

"He is gone to ———, I believe to the house of Mr. Norton, the attorney."

"Will you permit my Lord to seek him?" enquired Eleanor.

"I cannot," answered Constance, shaking her head. "Though I acknowledge that I wish to see him, to explain all that has occurred. Yet I feel, forcibly feel, the impropriety of suffering any one to make that explanation beside myself. It is, perhaps, too late to make it at all." After some moments of silence, she continued: "I

believe Sir Charles firmly attached to me. I hope I shall discharge my duty to him. He is generous, he is gentle, he is humane. I know his character so well, that I think he would even now resign his claim to my favour. Did he, or could he, suspect that my heart was not entirely his own, or did he know that Maningham was at liberty to seek me? Our attachment to each other, and the fatal bar which seemed to separate us, was well known to him. He believes that bar still insurmountable."

"If you design giving him your hand," said Eleanor, "why should you undeceive him? Why should you plant a thorn in his bosom, which you may never be able to extract? To inform him of the discovery you have made, unless you mean to profit by it, can be attended with no possible advantage. On the contrary, it might be productive of much evil, by leading him to impute every accidental depression of spirits to the want of bosom felicity, leading him to believe, that united to Maningham, you would have been happier."

"God forbid!" exclaimed Constance, fervently, "that he should ever think so. I trust and believe, my sister, that I can do my duty by Sir Charles. I believe I can regulate my feelings, and that the conflict once over, once decided, I can recover my serenity, my cheerfulness. But I confess I should have liked to open my whole heart to Sir Charles; to have informed him of my interview with Maningham, could I have done it without wounding his feelings. I abhor even the shadow of duplicity: For, are



not candour and sincerity the basis of friendship, and the very foundation of all domestic comfort?"

Lord Frederic took the hand of Constance. "You are an excellent young woman," said he, warmly. "You cannot fail to bestow happiness on Sir Charles. You cannot fail to be happy yourself. Pursue the path which duty points out to you. Fulfil your engagement, and believe, that the superintending care of a merciful Providence will ever guard and protect you."

Constance pressed his hand to her lips. Her voice was too tremulous for speech. Eleanor threw her arms round her sister, and kissed her cheek. "May the Almighty bless my Constance!" cried she. "May she be crowned with felicity! May she feel, as I do, the bliss of mutual affection!"

The night was far advanced. Eleanor took a candle, and, wishing her sister good night, retired. Her Lord, following her example, sought also his pillow.

## CHAP. XXVII.

*"Not the pangs of hope deferred  
My tormented bosom tear,  
On the tomb of hope insert'd,  
Scowls the spectre of despair."*

CONSTANCE sat for a considerable time after they were gone, buried in profound meditation. A heavy and oppressive sensation hung about her, and seemed to palsy her feelings. She could not exert herself. She could not reason. She leaned on her head on the table, covered her face with her handkerchief, and sighed, as if her heart was breaking. Recollection, however, at length returned—a confused memory of the painful past. A trembling anticipation of the future, followed. A faint and sickly sensation rose at her heart. Her breath was short and convulsive. She seemed to want air. She hastily staggered to the window, and opened the casement. The mild and refreshing breeze of the night appeared to afford instant relief to the feverish restlessness of her spirits, while the calmness of the surrounding scenery, and the still-

ness of the hour, seemed to communicate a portion of their quiescence to her disturbed heart.

The moon was just rising with a mild and solemn grandeur. Her rays played upon the water, and gilded the tips of the distant hills. A small bark hove in sight, sailing slowly through the bright beam reflected on the water. An agonizing thrill shot through the frame of the agitated Constance. Memory in an instant opened her ceaseless stores—"Remembrance waked with all her busy train." Her first introduction to Maningham rushed impetuously into her thoughts. All that had after occurred to endear them to each other; all the painful incidents which had disunited them; every recollection of his conduct: every occurrence that had happened, with which he was but remotely connected, seemed as fresh on the canvas of memory, as if only that instant portrayed.

The character of Maningham had lost nothing by intimacy. The graces of his form, the manly dignity of his features, were but the ornaments of an elevated mind, and a virtuous heart. "Yes!" exclaimed Constance, clasping her hands, "that heart, that noble, that generous heart, has stood the painful test of long acquaintance and trying circumstances. How, how can I then forget him? Oh, Maningham, Maningham! is it indeed a crime to love thee?" Her eyes were still fixed on the bark, which drew every instant nearer to the shore. The voice of a mariner, singing a popular Welch air, sounded melodiously on the distant breeze, and appeared

to echo back from the recesses of the lofty hills. Constance gasped convulsively. She held her hands to her temples. A feverish throb vibrated against her fingers. The scene, the hour, her own impetuous feelings, the recollection of the past, all wound up her mind to a pitch of frenzy. She was unconscious of her own intentions, as wildly she quitted the room, ran up a flight of stairs, entered a balcony, and as quickly descended to the open beach. There she threw herself on the damp ground, and uttered a thousand incoherences, still keeping her eyes fixed on the vessel; vacantly disregarding every other object. Her hand was at this moment suddenly grasped by a man, and her name in the same instant pronounced by him. She started and shrieked violently. He threw himself on his knees before her, conjuring her to compose herself, and hear him. Alas! she had heard him but too, too well. His voice could not be mistaken, though his features were unseen. She uttered the name of Maningham, and sunk insensible upon his bosom. What a situation for Maningham! He placed her gently on the grass. He flew to the beach, filled his hat with water, and sprinkled her face. Not the slightest motion, however, rewarded his exertions. He clasped his hands in agony. He cursed his own folly, his own madness, which had induced him to wander around her habitation. He besought Heaven to restore her senses. He conjured her, for Mercy's sake! to speak to him. But he received no answer. She appeared not to breathe. He made an effort to lift her in his arms, and carry her towards the

Castle, but as suddenly paused, from an apprehension of the strange suspicions his appearance would give rise to. "Will any one believe," cried he, frantically, "will any one believe, that this meeting was accidental? Yet what can I, what must I do?" Again he pressed the insensible Constance to his bosom. Again he besought her to open her eyes, and speak to him. A deep, a heavy sigh, burst from her labouring bosom. Maningham dipped his handkerchief in water, and washed her temples. He seated himself on a fragment of a rock, and supported her in his arms. Her head reclined upon his breast. His cheek touched her's. She opened her eyes. The sweet words of affectionate solitude sounded in her ears. The warm glow of passionate attachment breathed on her cheek. She felt herself encircled in the arms of the only being she had ever loved. "Oh! why have you waked me to an existence of wretchedness, and sorrow?" cried she, faintly whispering her complaints to the attentive ear of Maningham. "Why did you not permit me to die, thus sheltered in your arms? It is sweet, it is consolatory to believe, that our last sigh is breathed in the bosom of affection. Oh, Maningham! why are you thus gentle? or why is it a crime to love you!"

Maningham clasped her fervently in his arms. "If you really love me, Constance," said he, warmly, "rise above the little prejudices of the world. Inform Sir Charles of your repugnance to fulfil your engagement. It is surely more honourable to retreat at the foot of the altar, than

to offer up vows in the sight of Heaven, from which the heart revolts."

Constance recovered from her supineness instantly. She attempted to rise but was unable. Maningham assisted her. "Be not agitated, Constance," said he. "I mean only to appeal to the tribunal of your own reason. Suffer me to converse with you only ten minutes. But first recover yourself. Is there no means of returning to the house without rousing your domestics?"

"I have already conversed with you too long, Maningham," said Constance, timidly. "This meeting, Heaven knows, was unsought by me. It is improper; you must leave me. What must any person think of me, who now saw us together?"

"Suffer me to support you to the house, and I will leave you," answered Maningham. "And as this is the only opportunity I may ever have of again speaking to you, permit me to ask you only one question. Do you, can you think, that a mere lip-deep promise, in which the affections have no share, ought to cancel an engagement of the heart? Will it cancel it? Are you secure of being able to perform your duty to Sir Charles? Or can you conscientiously repeat a form of words at the altar, which your heart in the same moment denies? Do you owe nothing to my long-tried love? Ought you to make a wreck of my happiness? For God's sake, Constance! consider! Is not every principle of virtue violated by the sacrifice you are about to make? How can you answer the solemn appeal of the

officiating priest? 'I charge you both, as ye shall answer it at the dreadful day of judgment, when the secret of all hearts shall be disclosed, that if either of you know any lawful impediment:—' Constance shuddered convulsively, and Maningham went on. "Is not an alienation of the heart an impediment? Oh, Constance! is not your first promise mine?"

They had at this moment reached the steps of the balcony. Constance, supporting herself by the railing, paused. She held out her hand to Maningham. "Though not convinced by your arguments," said she, faintly, "I confess my resolution wavers. I begin to fear I have been wrong. Where are you? I will either write to you, or see you again, before I take any step of moment."

"Ten thousand blessings attend you," said Maningham. "I will call this way myself. I will, I must see you again." And eagerly pressing her hand, he left her too much agitated to reflect at the moment on the strange appearance his visit would have to the family.

With much difficulty, Constance reached her own room, where she instantly cast off her wet and damp clothes, and threw herself into bed; in vain striving to reflect with composure on all that had recently happened, and to form resolutions for futurity. Sir Charles, the whole world were forgotten. Maningham was alone present to her imagination. She determined, however late, to make a full disclosure of every circumstance to Sir Charles. And if he then persisted in his wishes of fulfilling his engagement with her, to

endeavour to summon fortitude to effect the sacrifice.

On the day following, she was too ill to quit her bed. The agitation she had suffered the preceding night and day, the damp which had penetrated her garments, having so long reclined on the dewy ground, all contributed to encrease the fever, which constant irritation had at first created. Every succeeding hour added to her malady.

Eleanor, who had received early intimation of her disease, was quite terrified at the change which a few hours had made in her appearance, and immediately dispatched a domestic for medical assistance, while others of the family went different ways in pursuit of Sir Charles.

Eleanor was half distracted. She had not yet seen her mother. How could she introduce herself to her, without the supporting assistance of her sister? And how could she account satisfactorily for that sister's absence? The effort, however, must be made, and exerting her fortitude, she struggled to attain composure for the interview.

It is beyond my powers of description to paint the scene which followed. Mrs. Mountstewart threw herself on the neck of her daughter, and wept bitterly. Then rising on her knees, she clasped her hands and implored her to forgive her. "If I had done my duty by you," cried she; "if a mother's care had watched over you, all the follies, all the vanity, all the misery of your past life had been spared you. Yes, I



have assisted in exposing my children to temptation, by deserting their hapless infancy."

Eleanor threw herself on her knees by the bedside. Convulsive sobs impeded her utterance. She conjured her mother to be composed, to take comfort to herself, and to bless her child.

Mrs. Mountstewart fervently implored the Almighty to bless her. And then, with the deepest humility, recapitulated the painful events of her past life, until, overcome by exertion, she found herself unable to proceed, when the watchful Martha insisted on Eleanor's retiring. Happily, by this means, the latter escaped answering any enquiries the invalid might otherwise have made after Constance.

## CHAP. XXVIII.

"Nor does old age a wrinkle trace  
More deeply than despair."

It is now time to account to my readers for the sudden appearance of Sir Charles Rouverie. Since her return from Scotland, Constance had received several overtures from Mrs Linzee to renew their acquaintance, which she had uniformly treated with the contempt they deserved. These repulses had exasperated that lady, and with the amiable idea of making mischief between the lovers, she had sat down and composed an anonymous epistle to Sir Charles, informing him of the attachment which had long subsisted between Constance and Maningham; and adding thereto a broad hint, that they were still in the habit of meeting privately.

Sir Charles discredited the information, but at the same time he wisely resolved to make his appearance suddenly at Landrenden, at a moment when he was unexpected, believing he could not fail to detect his rival, if in the vicinity;

believing also, that his supposed distance would throw the lovers off their guard. He put the letter into his pocket, and set off on his journey ; returned again before the appointed time, and actually beheld Maningham conversing with Constance in the shrubbery. He immediately sought the apartment of Mrs. Mountstewart, and from her he learnt, that there was no longer any bar to disunite Constance and her lover. For a moment self so far overcame the better feelings of his nature, that he determined to persevere in his own claims. But an instant's reflection restored the native dignity of his character, and he resolved to make Constance happy, even if he sacrificed himself to do so. He went immediately in pursuit of Maningham, under pretence of making some necessary alterations in the settlements, determining to keep his intentions secret from Constance, and to see her no more till the moment appointed for their union, when he meant to introduce Maningham to her. But as yet all his efforts to see Maningham had been fruitless, and he was just about to give up the attempt when the messenger sent to inform him of the illness of Constance arrived. He now blamed himself for the secrecy he had observed respecting his own designs. He had no doubt her malady was occasioned by the internal struggle between affection and duty, and he was half distracted. He, however, hastened to the Castle to join the melancholy group, who anxiously waited to hear the opinion of the physician concerning Constance. Yet at the same moment,

fearful of losing Maningham, he dispatched his servant to seek him.

The physician and Maningham arrived at the same moment. The countenance of the latter painfully evinced the interest he felt for the sufferer. And while the Doctor went to visit his patient, Sir Charles opened his business to Maningham. Eleanor accompanied the Doctor, and Lord Frederic stationed himself at the door of the invalid's apartment to await his return. "I have sent for you, Maningham," said Sir Charles, after some hesitation, "to congratulate you on your good fortune. I am now convinced that Constance Mountstewart can only be happy with you. Great, great as is the sacrifice, I resign her to you. If she recovers, it is mine to bestow her on you.

"Generous, noble-minded Sir Charles!" exclaimed Maningham, "you, you alone can deserve her."

Sir Charles walked about the room in great agitation. "The generosity is none!" cried he. "I resign nothing. She could not make me happy. She loves, she loves me not."

Maningham could not speak. Sir Charles continued: "Highly as I esteem Constance Mountstewart, highly as I think of her, I should be loath to entrust my happiness to a woman who loves me not. I doubt whether she could possibly perform her duty: and knowing the secret feelings of her heart, even the performance of that duty would not perhaps satisfy me. Since then I am uncertain of securing my own happiness, why should I make two beings

wretched? Why should I not seek happiness in forming the happiness of others? Oh, Maningham! for your sake, I pray God to spare her. I think that you deserve her; and I beseech the Almighty to bless you both!"

Maningham caught the hand of Sir Charles. His heart was too full for utterance. He rushed out of the room. In the antichamber, however, he paused to await the return of the physician; and, as he paced up and down the apartment, he softly whispered to himself:—"It is too, too late! She will die! She will die, and I shall lose her for ever! Oh! had we only known this, last, last night, how happy, how supremely happy, might we have been! Noble, generous Sir Charles! Let my dear Constance, oh, merciful Heaven, live to thank him!"

For several days the insensible Constance lay without hope of restoration, unconscious of the consolations of friendship; insensible to the attachment of those who constantly hovered round her sick-bed. During all this time, she raved incessantly of Maningham and Sir Charles; conjuring the latter to release her from an engagement which she found it impossible to fulfil.

The anguish of Eleanor was almost insupportable. It was impolitic any longer to attempt concealing an illness from Mrs. Mountstewart, which the slightest accident might betray, and which even the absence of Constance must lead her to suspect. Yet she trembled to think, that the communication of the state of her sister might shorten the little remnant of existence, which was yet permitted to her parent.

Lord Frederic, anxious for the restoration of Constance, was yet more anxious lest the health of Eleanor should suffer by the attention she paid to her mother and sister.

Sir Charles awaited to hear the event of Constance's indisposition. It was his determination to quit Landrenden the moment she was pronounced convalescent. While Maningham, feeling his whole happiness at stake, and that the life dearer to him than existence was quivering on the verge of eternity, found it impossible to controul his feelings; but in restless anxiety walked about the Castle, listening to every sound, giving way at different periods to all the bliss of hope, at others sinking into the depth of despair. Sir Charles, scarcely more himself, listened to his complaints, and participated in his anxiety. And a deep and general expression of regret went through the family.

Much as Eleanor softened the account of her sister's indisposition, when she broke it to her mother, Mrs. Mountstewart could not fail to perceive that it was dangerous; and bitterly upbraided herself with having permitted the constant attendance of her daughter in her sick chamber. She insisted on being immediately conveyed to the apartment of her poor child.

Eleanor with difficulty prevailed upon her to give up the intention; but weakness and agitation had, towards the close of the day, so entirely exhausted her, that it was believed impossible she could survive the night. Eleanor, feeling that her first duty was now to attend her

parent, resigned the care of Constance to a domestic. The violence of her frenzy had in some degree abated. She seemed sunk into a composed slumber. And old Martha having taken her station at the bedside of her young mistress, every one retired for the night, and quietness reigned throughout the Castle. Eleanor threw herself into an arm-chair, at a small distance from the bed, and watched the pale and deathlike countenance of her mother. Her eyes were closed, yet she did not sleep. A convulsive flutter seemed to steal over her frame, and a low murmur at intervals issued from her lips. Eleanor knew too plainly that she was fast going, and lifted up her heart in ardent prayer to the Almighty to shorten her sufferings.

At this moment the door suddenly opened, and Constance (who had broken from the restraining hand of Martha, with her hair dishevelled, and in her night clothes) rushed into the room. "Hush, for God's sake, hush!" exclaimed Eleanor, lifting her hand to her mouth in token of silence: "My mother, you will disturb my mother! I believe, I think she is dying!"

"I have no mother," said the wild and agitated Constance, rushing to the bed-side and undrawing the curtain. "I have no mother. I never had one."

Mrs. Mountstewart started, and raising herself in her bed, looked wildly on Constance. "I thought, I thought you was ill, my love?" said she.

"Have you seen Maningham?" asked Constance, "or Sir Charles? When I was married to Sir Charles, you know, I promised to obey him. But when he told me to hate Maningham, the being I love better than my own existence, how could I?"

"Go back to bed, my dear, dear Constance," said Eleanor, attempting to sooth her. "You will encrease your fever by this folly. Now pray do go back."

"I cannot sleep in my own bed, as I used to," answered Constance, rubbing her forehead. "The pillow is hard, every thing is hard, but my own poor heart, and that is most breaking. It is a consolation, however, to know, that when it is broken, it will cease to feel."

"My God, my God, have pity on me!" cried the agonized mother, throwing herself out of bed. "Can this indeed be possible? Is my child ill? Is she frantic? Has she lost her senses?"

"She is in a fever. Her malady is but temporary. I trust in God, she will soon be better," said Eleanor. "Do, do, my sister, go back to bed."

"Are you my mother?" asked Constance, "are you my mother? No, I have no mother. She left, yes, my own mother left me, left her poor innocent baby to the scorn of a pitiless world. Well, is there any cause in nature for these hard hearts? And then you all told me I must not love Maningham, but indeed, indeed I could not help it. But don't tell Sir Charles." Then shrugging up her shoulders, and speaking in a low whisper, as if fearful of being overheard,



she continued :—" Sir Charles sleeps now quietly in his bed. His slumbers are undisturbed. If I could have got hold of a knife, or a sword, he would have told no tales."

" Monstrous !" exclaimed Mrs. Mountstewart, with a loud shriek. " Oh, my poor, unhappy child !"

Constance looked at her vacantly. Eleanor took the arm of her sister, and with the assistance of the statue-like Martha, who feared to incur blame, for having suffered her to escape, forced her back into her own room, and then hastily returned to her mother. But it was too late. The agonies of death were upon the unhappy woman. And, as her afflicted daughter strove to lift her in her arms, she uttered a faint groan and expired.

The half-fainting Eleanor placed the lifeless frame on the ground, and, nerved up to an astonishing pitch of resolution, rang the bell violently. Her husband and several of the domestics instantly made their appearance. The former insisted on her quitting a scene so dreadful and soul-harrowing. And his soothing tenderness and caresses at length softened her acute feelings, and she burst into tears. Lord Frederic wiped the falling drops from her cheek. He soothed her sorrow. And, having at length reasoned her into some degree of composure, he obliged her to go to bed ; promising himself to watch by her, and frequently to step to the door of the afflicted Constance, to see that she was safe.

Whether, however, the crisis of the disorder was arrived, or that the exertion used by Constance had proved salutary, is uncertain, but she was now fast asleep. Having watched her a few moments, to assure himself that she really slept, Lord Frederic returned again to his wife, convinced that, from the present composed state of the invalid, every thing might be hoped.

At the end of two days, Constance was pronounced out of danger; and Sir Charles Rouverie, feeling that his presence might be a restraint upon the family, took a reluctant leave, and set out on his journey to Scotland; accompanied by Maningham, who attended him several stages, and whose warm admiration of his character and disinterested generosity, had, if possible, encreased the friendship which before subsisted between them. When they at length separated, Sir Charles shook Maningham by the hand, and, desiring he might hear from him frequently, continued: "Believe me, that, however I regret my own disappointment, I rejoice in your happiness. Your long attachment to Miss Mountstewart deserves to be rewarded. I feel convinced that she will find felicity in becoming your wife, and that is my consolation."

Maningham could not speak. His heart was too full for utterance. He pressed the hand of Sir Charles in silence. Sir Charles ascended the carriage, and Maningham saw him no more.

Before Constance was well enough to quit her bed, the remains of Mrs. Mountstewart were consigned to the tomb, that every cause of future agitation might, if possible, be removed from her,

Maningham and Lord Frederic attended as chief mourners. As she was unknown in the neighbourhood of Landrenden, except by her fictitious name of Wilson, she was by that name consigned to the vault of her husband's family. By this means a veil was cast over all that pertained to her former history; and her children were spared those comments on her past conduct, which, however innocent themselves, could not have failed to tinge their cheek with the burning blushes of shame.

Maningham was the first visitor received by Constance, after she was able to quit her bed. The first meeting being over, he was her constant nurse and companion. At the end of three months from the death of Mrs. Mountstewart, he received her hand at the altar, and acknowledged that all his sufferings were rewarded.

Eleanor and her husband having witnessed these espousals, set off for London, where the active duties of public life called Lord Frederic; and where Eleanor again mixed with the sons and daughters of dissipation; but not as formerly. She had profited by past experience, and had learned to use the blessings of Providence, without abusing them; to think lightly of the admiration of the multitude, and to feel that her chief riches consisted in a clear conscience, and that her chief happiness must be sought at home. She saw also, that the grave and the circumspect seemed to scrutinize her present conduct, and while they received and returned her visits, avoided a particular intimacy. Yet she patiently determined to endure the penalty inflicted on

all those who step out of the beaten path into that of folly and eccentricity; and, by doubly guarding her future conduct find out the only effectual way to silence the scruples of the virtuous, and the slanders of the malevolent. May all who have been falsely accused resort to such a mode of justification!

The misfortune of Sir Charles Rouverie was lamented by the gentle Miss Rabey with the tenderest commiseration. She had herself loved and been disappointed. Yet, in the hope of consoling Sir Charles, she forgot self, or rather felt a renewed hope, that he would listen to the voice of consolation, and in time reward the sufferings of the consoler.

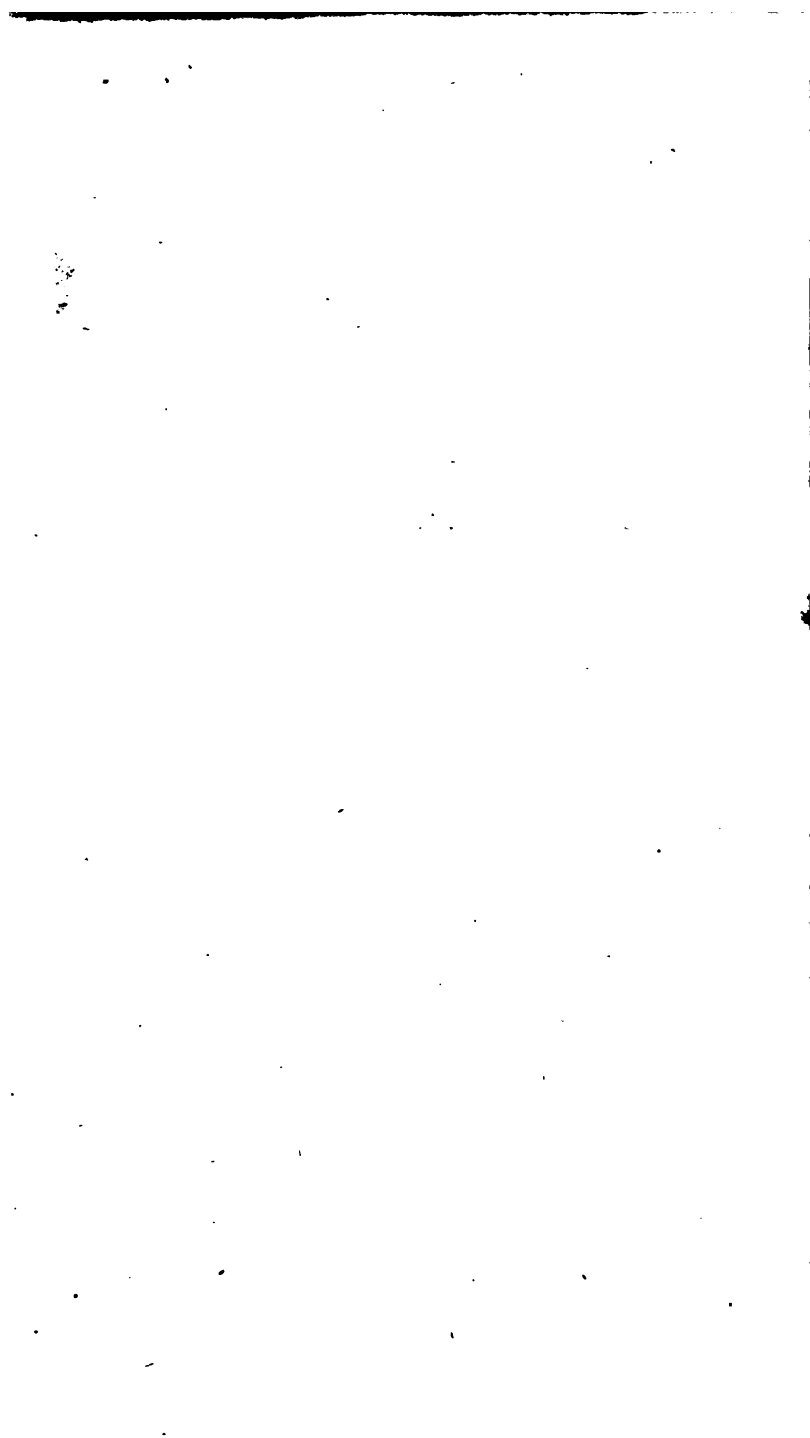
Mrs. Linzee, and her *chere amie*, Lord John, live a mutual torment to each other, and afford a living and awful warning to all those who tread the paths of vice and profligacy. For while rich and poor court the society of Maningham and Constance, and call down blessings on their heads, the habitation this wretched couple occupy is deserted by every class. The very dependants, who exist by their bounty, and who administer to their necessities, laugh at and despise them; proving that even to cover vice with a mantle of gold, will not hide her deformity, but rather point her out to public view, and encrease the disgust she creates.

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*The Author of the foregoing pages begs to observe, that, in the remarks made by John Wassel,*

*no invidious or ungenerous intention lurks towards the Spaniards. She has merely adopted a mode of expression which she thought appropriate to an English common soldier in such a situation. She begs the Reader's candour to the faults he or she may find in this Work, which she feels are too numerous to stand the severe test of criticism.*

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